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The Games machine

■ THE HAPPENIN' GUIDE TO COMPUTER GAMES ■ *STUNNING NEW LOOK ISSUE!*

SMASH IT UP!

Enter into battle with the block-busting beat-'em-ups and bruisers!

LOST PATROL

It'll kill ya!



EXPOSED!

SPACE ACE

Beat Borf at his own game! Complete game guide page 66



CES

USA GOES CRAZY!

Action packed show report



HEY, 1990!

Keyboards out! Consoles in!

THE DEF GUIDE TO CONSOLES

PLUS: A PC ENGINE II MUST BE WON!

03
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3 SPECIAL

BATMAN THE *CAPED CRUSADER*
"Believe me this is brilliant, a finely-honed arcade adventure which is the best comic licence ever – you'd be batty to miss it." CRASH SMASH.
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OPERATION WOLF
"What more could anyone ask for in a shoot-em-up. Operation Wolf, simply is The Business." CRASH SMASH.
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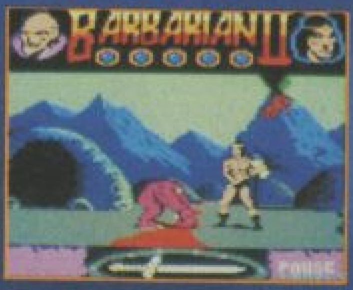


DOUBLE DRAGON
"Skillful programming has taken the superb graphics and addictive game play of the monster arcade hit and faithfully reproduced it on the home computer."

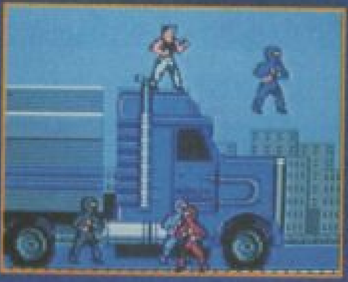
R-TYPE
"Here at S.U. we think it's about as close to an ultimate space blast as anyone will ever get. Fab."
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PILATION PACKS





BARBARIAN II
"Palace have really put everthing into this one .... It's all done with such enthusiasm, skill and style that I found myself itching to play it again and again." AMSTRAD ACTION MASTER GAME AWARD.
"packed with humorous touches ... great animation ... the sound effects too, are top quality ... hours of enthcalling play." ZZAP! 64 GOLD MEDAL AWARD.
© 1988 PALACE SOFTWARE



DRAGON NINJA
"A sure winner with the official conversion to the home computer." COMPUTER GAMES-WEEK. "A very enjoyable and addictive game ... The best conversion I have seen on the Amstrad." AMSTRAD ACTION.
© DATA EAST

OF THIS WORLD



WEC LE MANS
The world's most famous sports car race comes to your home computer screen with this exciting simulation of the 24 hour Le Mans race. This stimulating challenge inspired by Konami's sit in driving simulator reproduces all the elements at the famous race with every twist and turn of the track.
© KONAMI



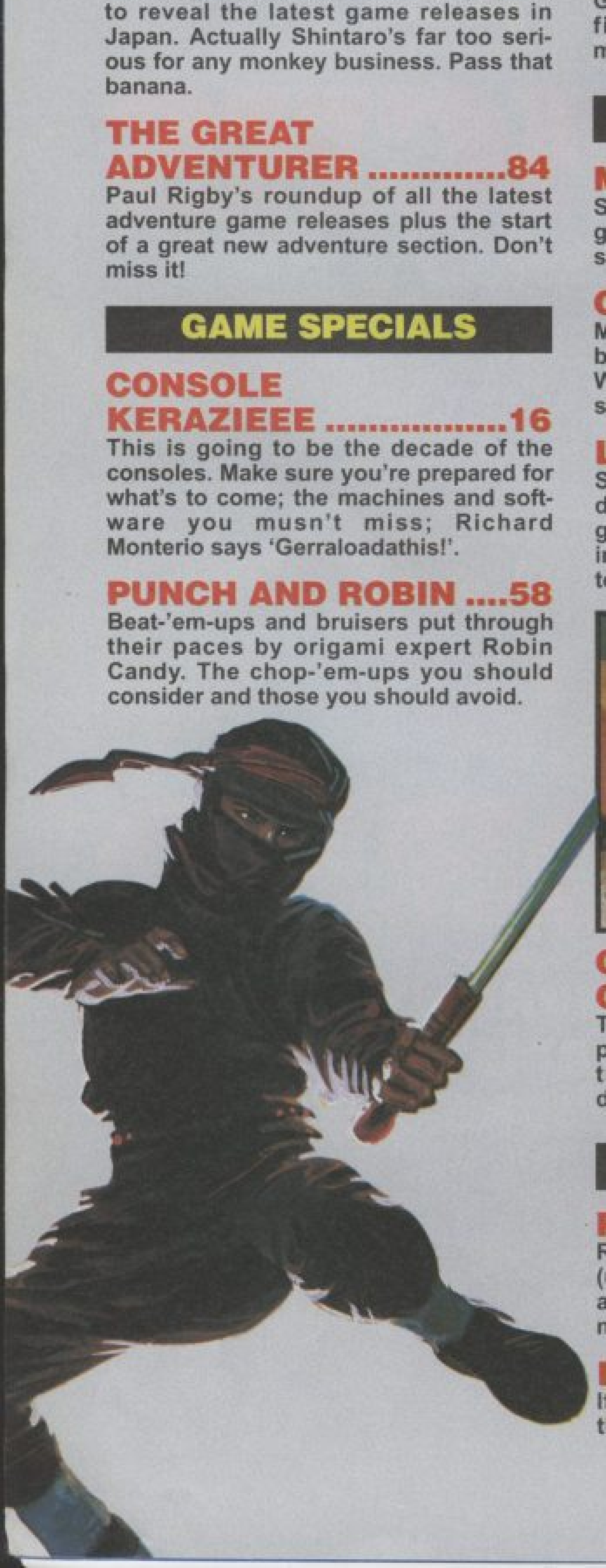
DOUBLE DRAGON
Join in deadly combat with the savage street gang of the infamous Shadow Boss. Use whatever weapons come to hand as you pursue the gang through the slums, factories, and wooded outskirts of the city to reach the Black Warrior hideout, for the final confrontation with the Shadow Boss himself!
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The Games machine







■ You too can create images like this. Find out how on page 76.



SUPER CES...61

All American... All action! The chaos of the Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show is happening on a five-page special. Marshal M Rosenthal was there — and survived!



SUPER GRAFX UP FOR GRABS

Find out how you could win the latest smooth-looking, power-packed, hum-dinger of a console

on page 22



GAMES INDEX



THALAMUS





The Retrograde: a vicious and lethal bounty-hunter out to loot a hostile system's treasure of diamond crystals even if he has to blow the place apart!
Level upon level of horizontal and vertical scrolling mayhem, over and under ground.
Be Retrograde, the stalking, flying death dealer!

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BOOT-UP



Welcome to the action! Go west with TGM as we take to you to Las Vegas, USA where the world of computer action reveals its future plans. It's the Consumer Electronics Show and Marshal M Rosenthal reports on the future of computer entertainment. And guess what? It's consoles! To guide you through the cartridge jungle there's a special consoles feature which will help you pick the best machine around. After trekking out west, get a taste of the east as Shintaro Kanaoya, our man in Japan, discovers three new PC Engine consoles. And TGM gives you the chance to win an amazing PC Engine II — the Super Grafx! It's all inside along with the latest games on all formats, tried and tested by TGM's panel of experts. Get ready to rock...

CASTLE MASTER

Freescape: It's back, back, back! Jump into an alternative reality in a totally new and well spooky Freescape action-adventure called Castle Master, taking you to an English haunted castle in the 16th Century!

Set for release in April by Domark and created by Incentive Software, Castle Master looks like being even better than Incentive's three previous Freescape games; Driller, Dark Side and Total Eclipse.

Plunge yourself into the labyrinthian network of tunnels and rooms in a bid to rescue a captured Prince/Princess (takes you back to the sexually equal days of 3-D Ant Attack) from one of the castle's four towers.

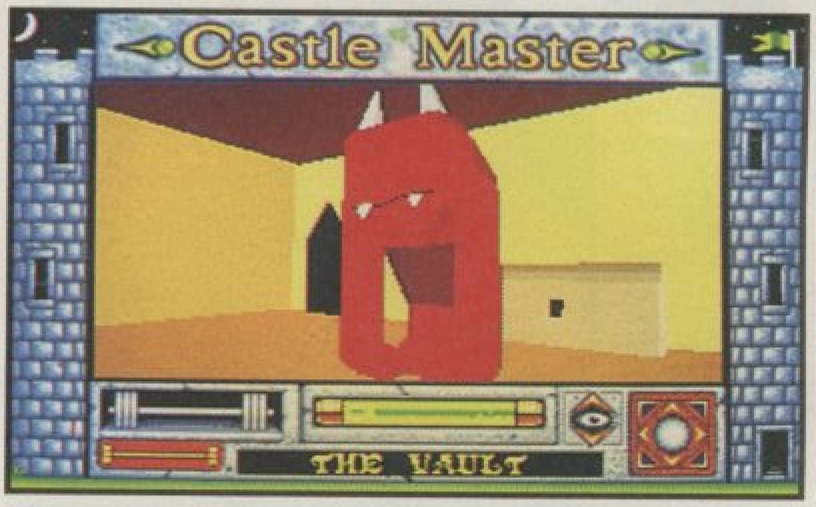
Lurking around dark corners are demons, ghouls and spirits possessing many useful objects.

Exploring the castle is vital — look out for messages, clues and keys to open locked doors. And remember to hunt out any scraps of food to keep your strength up.

You may have problems just getting into the castle! The drawbridge is shut, and if you can't discover a way to lower it you may as well pack up and go home!

The initial puzzles are fairly simple to unravel, but as you travel deeper into the vast complex you'll have to keep your wits about you to solve each new problem.

But what of you're defence? You're armed with a sling and a bag of rocks! It's going to be tough job, and do try to remember the way out!

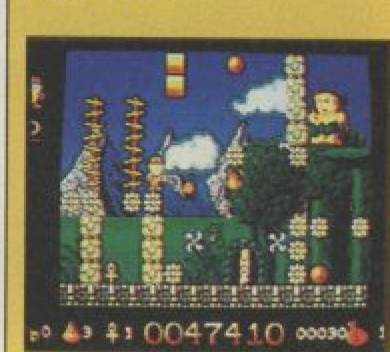


■ Castle Master running on the Amiga. Deep down in the vault a possessed, erm, something, gives you a black look. Does it scare the willies out of you, or what?



■ See more Freescape adventures in The Satellite Game, a kinda sequel to ITV's Knightmare show. You'll catch it on BSB, the new satellite TV channel, this spring

■ Crazy, crazy, crazy! That's Kid Gloves, developed by Timothy Closs who devised the equally odd and smashing budget hit I,Ball



KID GLOVES

Did Bombjack light your fuse? Did Rick Dangerous raid your lost ark? If they did, Logotron have Kid Gloves, just the game for you. Five frantic levels of platform action as Kid treks through the Ice Age, Egypt, America's West Coast, Rain Forests and the Industrial Revolution! Flippin' crazy?! It certainly is, just take a butchers at the screen shot — awash with colour! Bounding out for the ST and Amiga very soon.

■ Here he is! Kid and his gloves (hence the title!)



ESCAPE AGAIN

It's Tengen's Escape from the Planet of the Robot Monsters, the happenin' science-fiction knockabout comedy game. Take Jake 'n' Duke through the wonderfully weird Planet X rescuing hostages and freeing Professor Sarah Bellum. And just to prove the Speccy is very much alive and well here are a couple of shots from the isometric smash!





COBRA TRIANGLE



Here's the next game from ace development team RARE, once better known as Ultimate! Cobra Triangle, on Nintendo, has you zooming around in a weapon-filled speedboat racing down narrow stretches of river, blasting other boats and collecting power-ups. Jump on the poop deck and get ready to ride the ripples!



■ Up, up and awaeeeeee! Space Harrier II (Amiga), it's rather fast!

SPACE HARRIER II

Sega's frenetic futuristic mega-blast Space Harrier II is nearing completion from Grandslam on all major formats. Our hero thrusts himself high in the sky to do battle with oncoming hordes of mutants causing much mayhem. Sure to wear out the fire-button on your joystick — especially when you meet the Dark Harrier, a very unpleasant chap if ever there was one.

KONIX KICKS STIXS

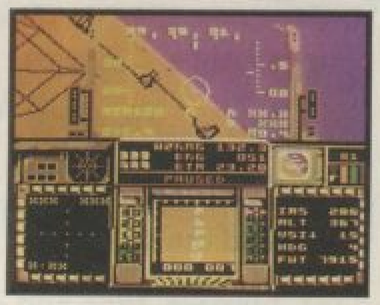
In a shocking move successful joystick manufacturer Konix have relinquished the rights to its range of joysticks, which include the original Speed King and Navigator. Spectravideo have snapped up the rights to sell the sticks in the UK. Spectravideo also has the rights to the Quickjoy range (pictured). Konix's move is thought to be an odd one, selling the UK rights of the product which actually built the firm. Although Konix reckon they have a larger presence outside the UK — they should know, I suppose. It should also give Konix a chance to concentrate on the Multi System console now expected in, wait for it... autumn.





F-16 COMBAT PILOT

Containing most of the thrills of the 16-bit original, the Commodore 64 version of Digital Integration's blockbusting fighter flying simulation F-16 Combat Pilot should be in your shops now. Training as the pilot of a F-16 Fighting Falcon in several missions (including Scramble, Hammerblow, Deepstrike, Tankbuster and Watchtower) you can go on to take part in the full blown multi-mission strategic campaign, Operation Conquest. Chocks away, bandits at 10 o'clock...



■ In F-16 Combat Pilot the cockpit and armaments are based the the latest equipment. Complete with infra-red weaponry the F-16C has laser targeting and the Lantirn target recognition and selection module which is jolly handy for night visibility. Blast the hell outta the sky with that AMRAAM missile — it has a range of 30 miles! Duuuuuuck!



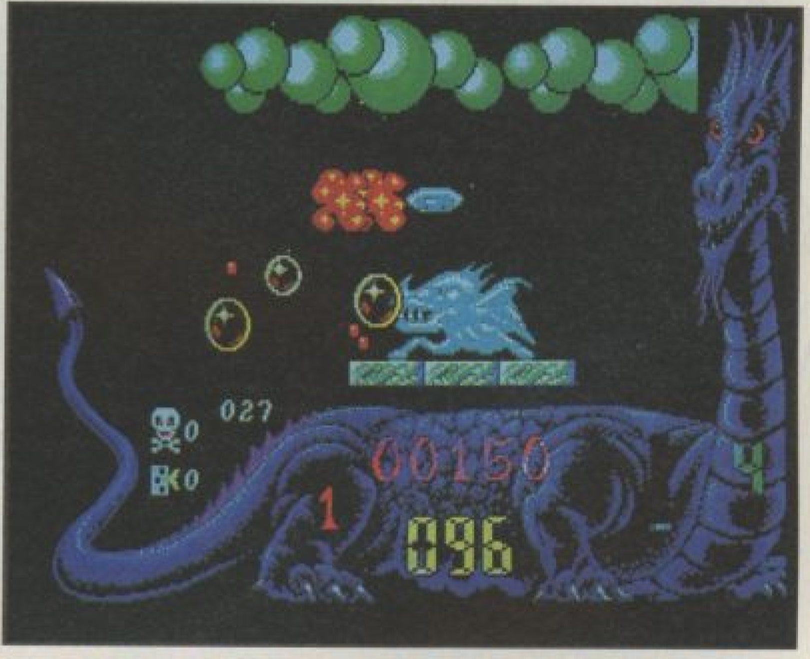
WINGS OF FURY

Ignition (chugga, chugga, chugga)... take off for Broderbund's combat flight game Wings of Fury on its way to ST, Amiga and PC owners. Your mission: to defend the huge, but heavily shot-up, aircraft carrier USS Wasp. Equip your plane, the Hellcat, with tons of bombs and destroy anything that challenges you. Join in a dogfight, bomb enemy ships and destroy island bases as your contribution to the bit of World War II that's raging over the Pacific Ocean.





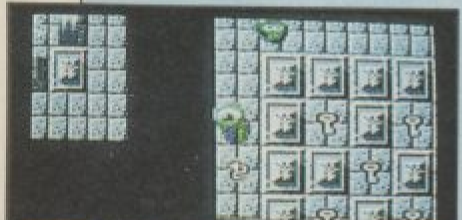
■ There are seven ranks under which you can fly in Wings Of Fury. Each one offers a more challenging set of missions and objectives than the last. The harder they get, the more the Hellcat gets shot up, so head on back to the Wasp. Should you be able to land on its miniscule landing strip, refuel, repair and take-off once more into heavy battle.



NETHERWORLD

Cripes!! Where's this? It's only Netherworld — a strange place and a positively strange game to boot — finally making its appearance on the PC from Hewson in March. Flip around the maze-like galaxies collecting diamonds and kicking some alien ass.

CLOUD KINGDOMS



■ Bound your way through the 32 different Cloud Kingdoms and don't miss the oh-so-helpful objects like wings, paint pots, bouncing shoes and potions!

Googly eyes and rubber bottoms, ahoy! Yes, those rather strange Japanese-styled characters abound in this bounce around game out in March on ST, Amiga, PC and Commodore 64 from Logotron. In Cloud Kingdoms the action is viewed from above looking down onto bizzare kingdoms which float high above the parallax-scrolling clouds. Spring around the 32 kingdoms collecting fizzy pop and other assorted objects, while avoiding the pitfalls like blackholes and acid pools. Created by Dene Carter, author of Firebird's Druid and Enlightenment, Logotron reckon this one'll beat Super Mario Bros in the addictivity stakes! Baaaadoing!



■ Cloud Kingdoms: it's bouncy, trouncy, bouncy, trouncy, fun, fun, fun, fun and the most wonderful thing about Cloud Kingdoms is that here's the Amiga screen. Erm...

CYBERBALL

Rah! Rah! Rah! The Superbowl's the one night of the year you can sit around the telly scoffing popcorn, hot dogs, burgers, fries and all things American and not feel at all guilty because you're watching the climax of the USA's favourite sport! Being released almost simultaneously is Domark's cracking Tengen coin-op conversion of Cyberball: American Football 2022 AD. It's not like your normal game, though. This one's played by 20 feet tall megalithic robots! Pit two immense cyborg teams against each other, program them with a selection of offensive and defensive strategies and watch the shrapnel fly! With a ball made of 350 pounds of solid steel and high explosives this is a game no human can play — except you on all major computer formats 'round about now.





■ (Left) Robots, 2000 pounds in weight, 20 feet tall and eight feet wide, worth about £1,250,000, prepare to attack in Cyberball on the Spectrum. (Above) Two upper-class twits (Domark's Mark and Dom), 280 pounds in weight, six feet tall, one-and-a-half feet wide and worth about £1,250,000 prepare for another loopy publicity shot

CONSOLE KERRRAZZZZEEE!

The whole world is now definitely going potty over the console market. At America's Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in January heaps of information was uncovered. Take for example the Amiga console, which is believed to be a revamped A500 machine with — wait for it — a built-in CD-ROM system to run the games! But with an estimated price tag of at least £400 it sounds a far too high a price to pay for 'just a console'. It's unlikely we'll hear anything more of this until the next CES in June.

Already a giant in the console wars, NEC, producer of the PC Engine and Super Grafx, are lining up the details for its hand-held machine. Developed by two of the team responsible for Atari's Lynx, the system is lighter than Nintendo's Game Boy and features a three-inch colour LCD screen, with the possibility of a cable to connect it to a standard TV. One of the main benefits will be the machine's ability to run current PC Engine accepting the same game cards as the desktop console. The finished product is anticipated to be released at Christmas, priced at roughly £200.

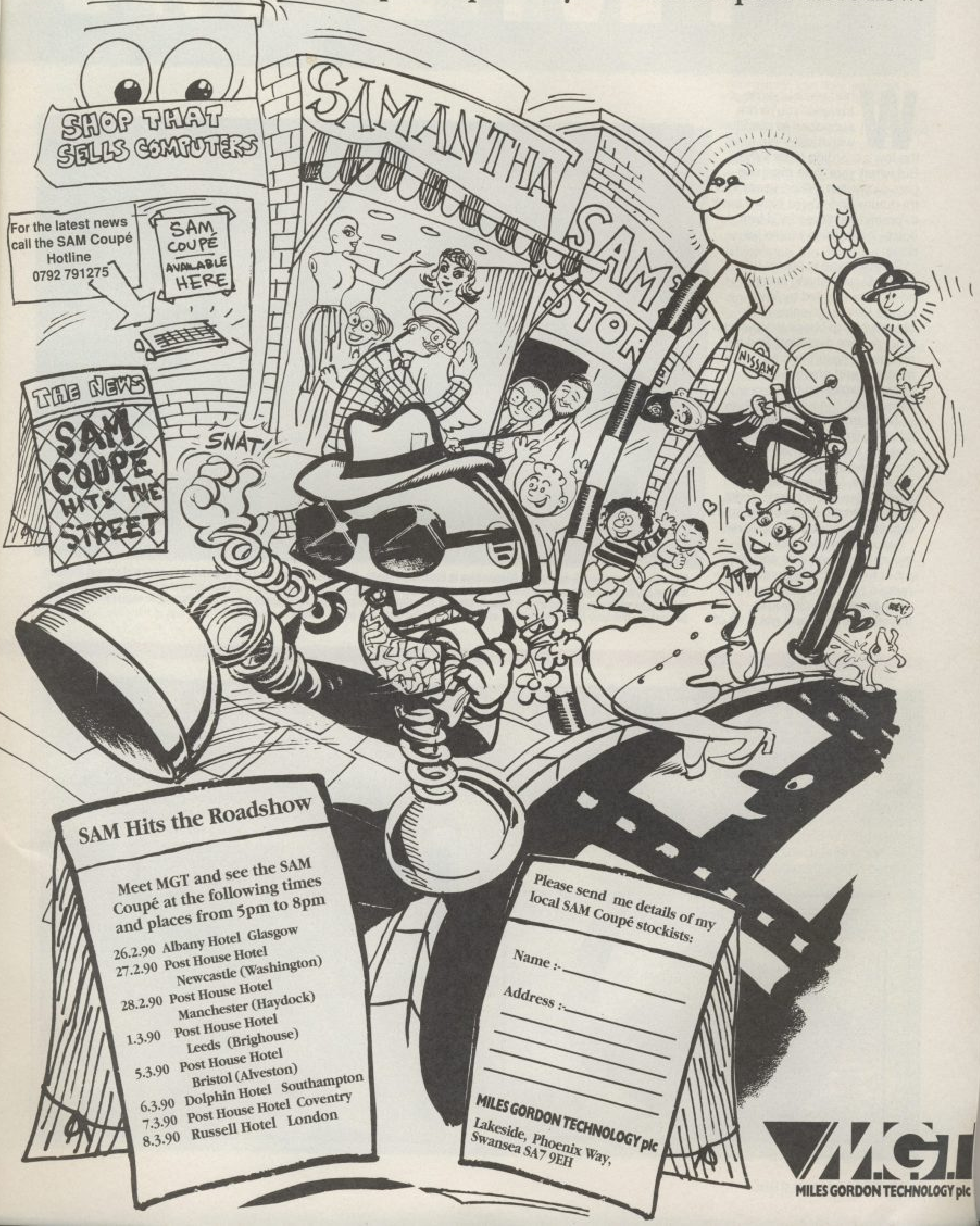
The successful Sega Master System has done great guns over Christmas, 200,000 homes now have a Sega. And now Sega have opened the flood gates allowing software houses to develop games for the Master System themselves. The first software houses expected to go for the Sega are Grandslam, US Gold and Titus. Funnily enough Sega's UK distributors Virgin Mastertronic are still in negotiation with the Japanese firm. Ten new titles are expected by 1991 including Gauntlet, Paperboy, The Flintstones, Fire 'n' Forget and Indiana Jones. In the autumn Virgin Mastertronic will begin the official distribution of the 16-bit Sega machine, the Mega Drive. Bad news for current grey-imported Mega Drive owners, none of the VM distributed games will run on their machine as they're being reconfigured for the UK. Haw Haw!



■ Here's NEC's PC Engine with CD ROM — are Commodore *really* planning a Amiga equivalent? And just think, you could be playing PC Engine games on a hand-held very soon!

SAM hits the Street!

See the exciting new SAM Coupé Computer at your local computer store now!



M.G.T.
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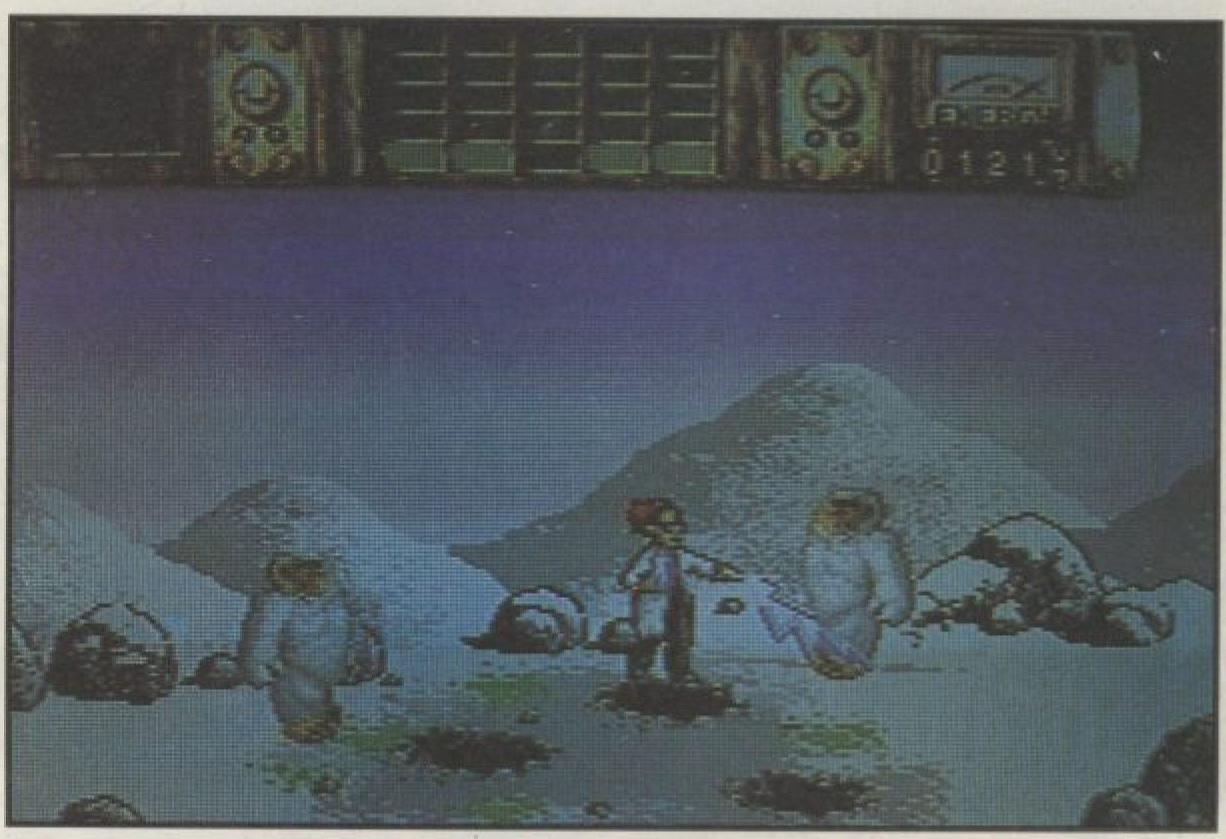
TIME MA

When you're a time traveller you're not supposed to meddle with history (so says the law according to Dr Who). But when your time machine gets blown ten million years into the future and you're blown back to prehistoric times by a terrorist bomb, something has to be done!

So the stage is set for this new 4-D roleplaying arcade adventure created by Vivid Image Developments. The objective is get back to your own time, restore evolution, find the means to repair the time machine and prevent the terrorist explosion from happening.

The game is split over five different time zones, each creating the next when you completed the present objectives. Viewed in forced perspective the scenery works as a horizontal flipscreen display with five screens to each level.

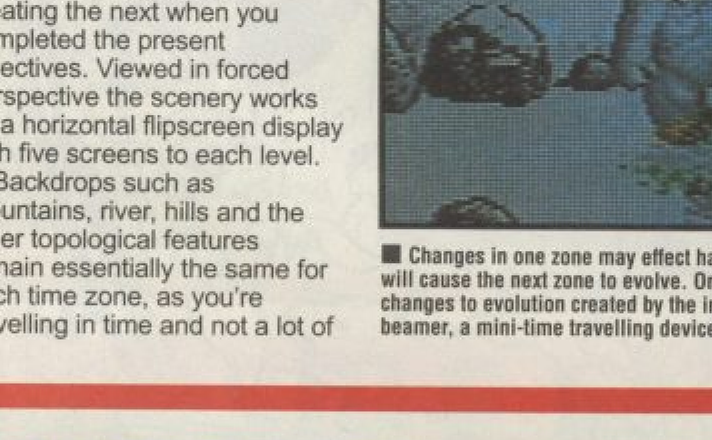
Backdrops such as mountains, river, hills and the other topological features remain essentially the same for each time zone, as you're travelling in time and not a lot of



■ Changes in one zone may effect happenings in other time zones. With the hero altering the status quo, a series of correct changes will cause the next zone to evolve. Once the hero has passed through a zone, it will continue to operate independently. However, any changes to evolution created by the inhabitants of a completed zone can alter subsequent zones. Luckily, you're equipped with a beamer, a mini-time travelling device, allowing you to flip back and repair things.

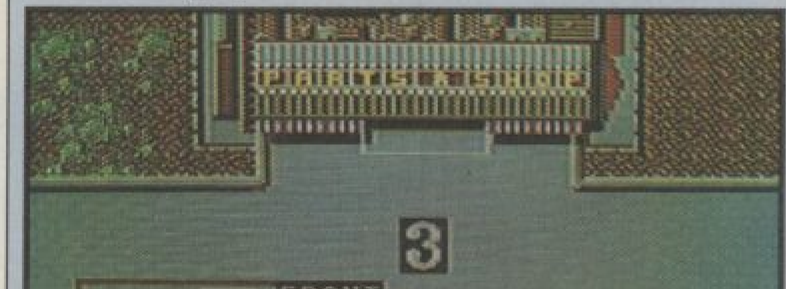
THE YOKE'S ON SEGA

Get a grip on those flying games with the latest widget to plug into your Sega Master System — the thrillingly dubbed Handle Controller. It's an ergonomically designed steering wheel which should 'bring a new dimension to Sega's driving and flying simulations' according to the pre-release gossip. The add-on is compatible with existing titles Thunder Blade, Out Run and Afterburner, and costs £39.95.

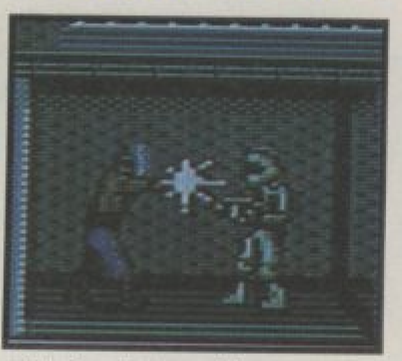


HOT ROD

Continuing their successful team-up with Sega, Activision are on the verge of releasing the ace coin-op racing game Hot Rod. Two player action abounds over thirty screens filled with changing weather conditions, tortuous tracks and zealous cops chasing you. And the better you do on a track, the more essential parts you can buy for your car to turn it into a real mean machine!



ACHINE



■ Previewed a few months ago, Hammerfist, from Vivid Image, out in April from Activision; all formats



■ Zap that primeval creature! Reeking of Back to the Future, Time Machine (which is only a working title) is currently 'evolving' from the creative minds of the Vivid Image team. They include, among other notables, Mev Dinc, Hugh Riley and John Twiddy, famed for Last Ninja II (System 3) and their other game, developed under the Vivid Image label, Hammerfist. Both games are to be released by Activision; Hammerfist in April and Time Machine will follow in a few months.

space. Things in the foreground develop; buildings, trees and paths reflect the character of each zone. The first zone is, obviously, the primeval era into which you are thrown.

Man's forebears need protection from the dinosaurs which stalk the land and, to keep loosely to the history books, you have to start the Ice Age. Which leads nicely into zone two where you now have to end the Ice Age which leads into zone three, the Bronze Age. Man has developed into two sects; builders and marauders. Naturally the builders must be encouraged to pop off and discover the wheel, taking time to Middle Ages — zone four.

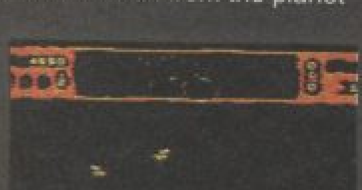
Now all humans are a threat to you, but if you create the Industrial Revolution by discovering oil it should be a lot easier in the final zone. And here we are in the present day. Locate the time machine and prevent its destruction by finding a power source. Take control of the technological wonder and complete the game. Evolution, eh? Birrova doddle if you ask

4TH DIMENSION

Hewson are makin' whoopee with a Commodore 64 compilation featuring four brand-spanking new games; it's a software album! The pack, 4th Dimension, is headed up by Sensible Software's barmy Stargate-style blaster, Insects in Space. Monster portions of chaotic action as you try to stop the killer bees pinching the Babies Of Fun from the planet



■ Cyberdyne Warrior: 'Blam!'



■ Insects in Space: 'Bzzzz'

surface. Track two is Cyberdyne Warrior, created by Apex Computer Productions. Similar to their smashing Thalamus game Retrograde, you have to capture escaped droids which roam over and under the planet surface. Check out the graphics and smart animation.

In Mission Impossibubble, baby orbs have been suspended around a planet. Follow the compass directions to collect pieces of scroll and complete the rescue mission. Your firepower? Bubbles. Oh dear... And finally, a nutty platform bounce around game called Head the Ball. Rescue Head's girlie, captured by evil Gobba, by bouncing through the tricky paths. Watch out for the Nail-Heads which burst poor Head. Eeek! Review next issue.



■ Mission Impossibubble: 'Spring!'



EA WINS

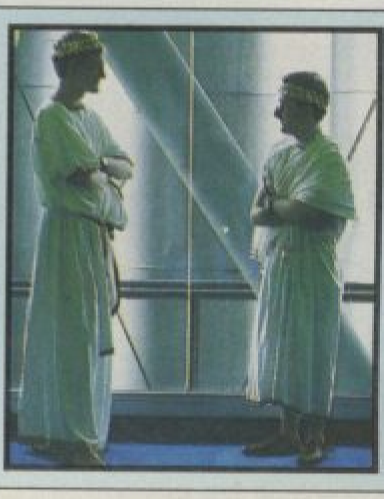
Electronic Arts' marvellous art package Deluxe Paint III was the first ever winner of Commodore's Enterprise and Vision award. The accolade is given to the program which best utilises the features of the Amiga, and was awarded at the Industry's award ceremony in December. The prize not only included a rather snoot trophy but £2000, half of which was automatically donated to the Royal Variety Club charity. Electronic Arts, being the generous sort, gave the other half to the charity too. Nice, eh? Populous also won two awards — one for Best Original Game of 1989 and the other for programming team Bullfrog who were dubbed Programmers of the Year.

IMPERIUM

Out in March from Electronic Arts is a natty strategy game called Imperium (ST, Amiga, PC) which lets you loose on the development of human race from 2020 AD to 3020 AD. P'haps you could wangle your way to become the last surviving emperor of the galaxy, manipulating economic, diplomatic, political and military factors.

Anyone could rule the world in Imperium, EA's sophisticated strategy game. Designed by Matthew Stibbe, an old dabhand at wargaming, and programmed by Nick Wilson — his first 16-bit product — with graphics by Karl Cropley who previously worked on the stunning sepia piccies for The Hound of Shadow.

Imperium — a barrel of laughs an' no mistake, review next issue.





DRAGONS BREATH

Phooooee! The only time you're likely to smell Dragon's breath is approximately three seconds before having your head bitten off. But in Palace Software's latest you'll smell a lot of dragon's breath as you're breeding the bleeders.

Dragons Breath is a fantasy-cum-strategy game where you battle it out with three other players all attempting to gain supremacy. Send your specially bred dragons out into the world and conquer land. Then slap a poll tax (ugh!) on the land, make loadsadosh, buy yourself more dragons and increase your magical capabilities. Zap others out of the game and grab the secret of immortality. ST and Amiga owners beware!

WHO'S THAT GIRL?

Just who was the female staring out of last issue's cover? She is the very charming Nikki Hemming of IDG, a distribution and marketing company which represents Rainbow Arts and Atari's ARC label. Much 'phwooooaring' and 'gigglysnorting' issued from the scumbags in the production dept when Ms Hemming boarded SS TGM; yet, strangely enough, went bright red and didn't issue a squeak when we offered to introduce them to her. Pah, wimps!!

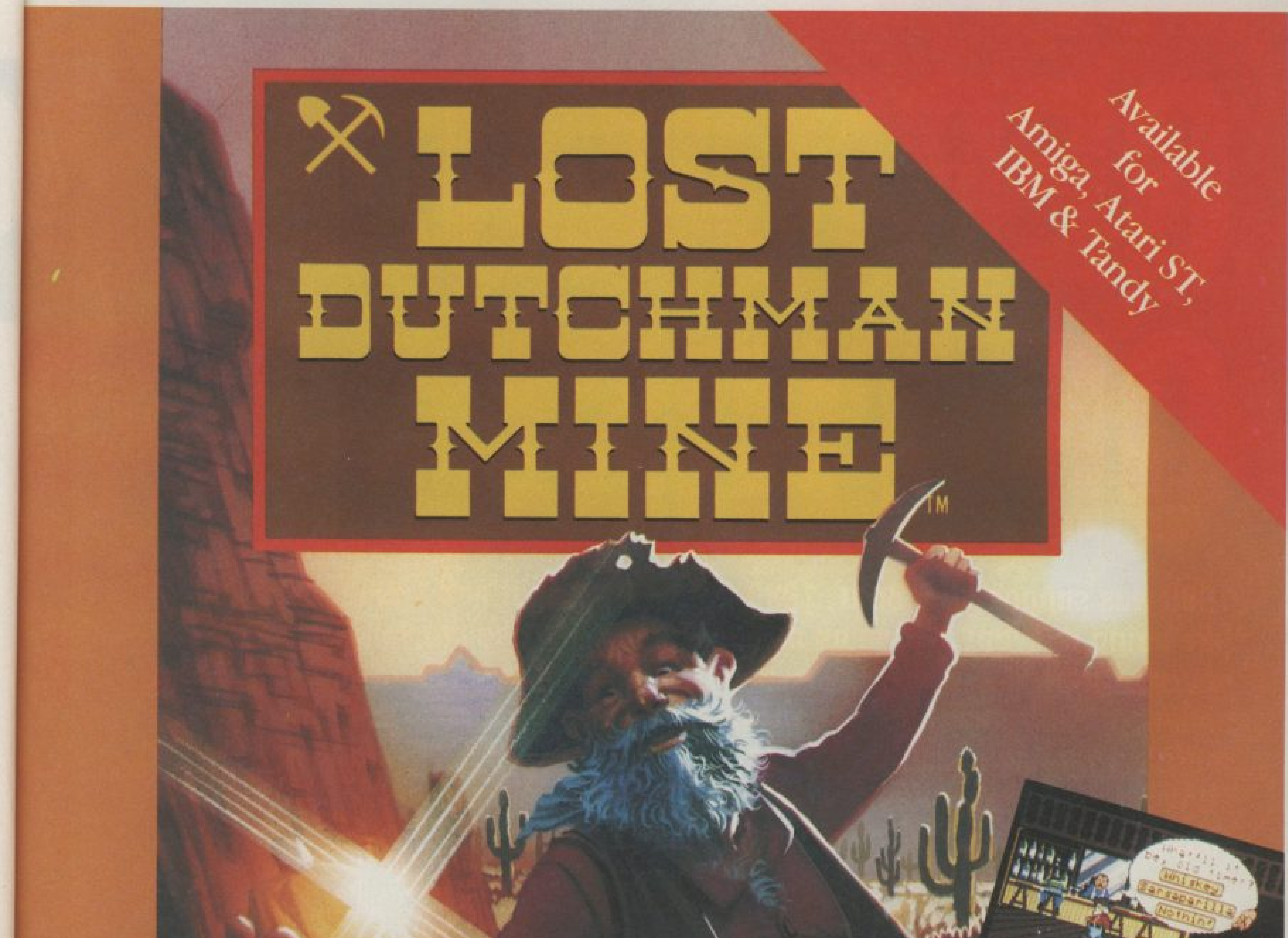


CORRESPOND!!

Do you live outside the UK? France, Germany or other parts of Europe, or even in America? If so, the good ship TGM wants to hear from you as we invite you to write about computer entertainment happenin' in your country. You must be able to read, write and speak English, obviously, and have a lot of information at your fingertips. If you reckon you fit the bill drop us a line with a bit about yourself and a sample piece of writing. Who knows, you could become one of TGM's all new correspondents! Write to: CORRESPONDENTS, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.

TGM CHART
THE GALLUP ALL-FORMATS
TOP 40

1 Paperboy **Encore**
2 Chase HQ **Ocean**
3 Fantasy World Dizzy **Code Masters**
4 Turbo Out Run **US Gold**
5 Buggy Boy **Encore**
6 Ghostbusters II **Activision**
7 Batman — The Movie **Ocean**
8 Gazza's Super Soccer **Empire**
9 Ghostbusters **Mastertronic**
10 Treasure Island Dizzy **Code Masters**
11 Peter Beardsley's Football **Premier**
12 Ghosts 'n' Goblins **Encore**
13 RoboCop **Ocean**
14 Crazy Cars **Hit Squad**
15 Count Duckula **Alternative**
16 The Untouchables **Ocean**
17 Space Harrier **Encore**
18 Ghouls 'n' Ghosts **US Gold**
19 Postman Pat II **Alternative**
20 Nigel Mansell's Grand Prix **Alternative**
21 Hard Drivin' **Domark**
22 Operation Thunderbolt **Ocean**
23 Renegade **Hit Squad**
24 Predator **Hit Squad**
25 Short Circuit **Hit Squad**
26 Double Dragon II **Virgin**
27 MiG-29 **Code Masters**
28 Boulderdash 4 **Hi-Tech**
29 Grid Iron II **Alternative**
30 Fighter Bomber **Activision**
31 Sooty & Sweep **Alternative**
32 International Karate + **Hit Squad**
33 US Aliens **Alternative**
34 Fist II **Mastertronic**
35 Super Sprint **Hit Squad**
36 Ninja Warriors **Virgin**
37 Powerdrift **Activision**
38 Special Action **Ocean**
39 Rampage **Hit Squad**
40 Combat School **Hit Squad**



Journey to the Old West in search of the fabled LOST DUTCHMAN MINE!

Enter the town of Goldfield to buy food and supplies. Play poker in the saloon, read the local news, or visit the bank, jail, livery, doctor or assay office.

Out in the desert, you can fish in the river, pan for gold, and explore over 100 abandoned mines and caves. Freezing nights, scorching days, rattlesnakes, bandits and renegade Indians are a constant threat. Features digitized sound, fabulous graphics and animated sprites.

Available for: Amiga, Atari ST, IBM CGA/EGA/MCGA & Tandy. Suggested Retail: $49.95.

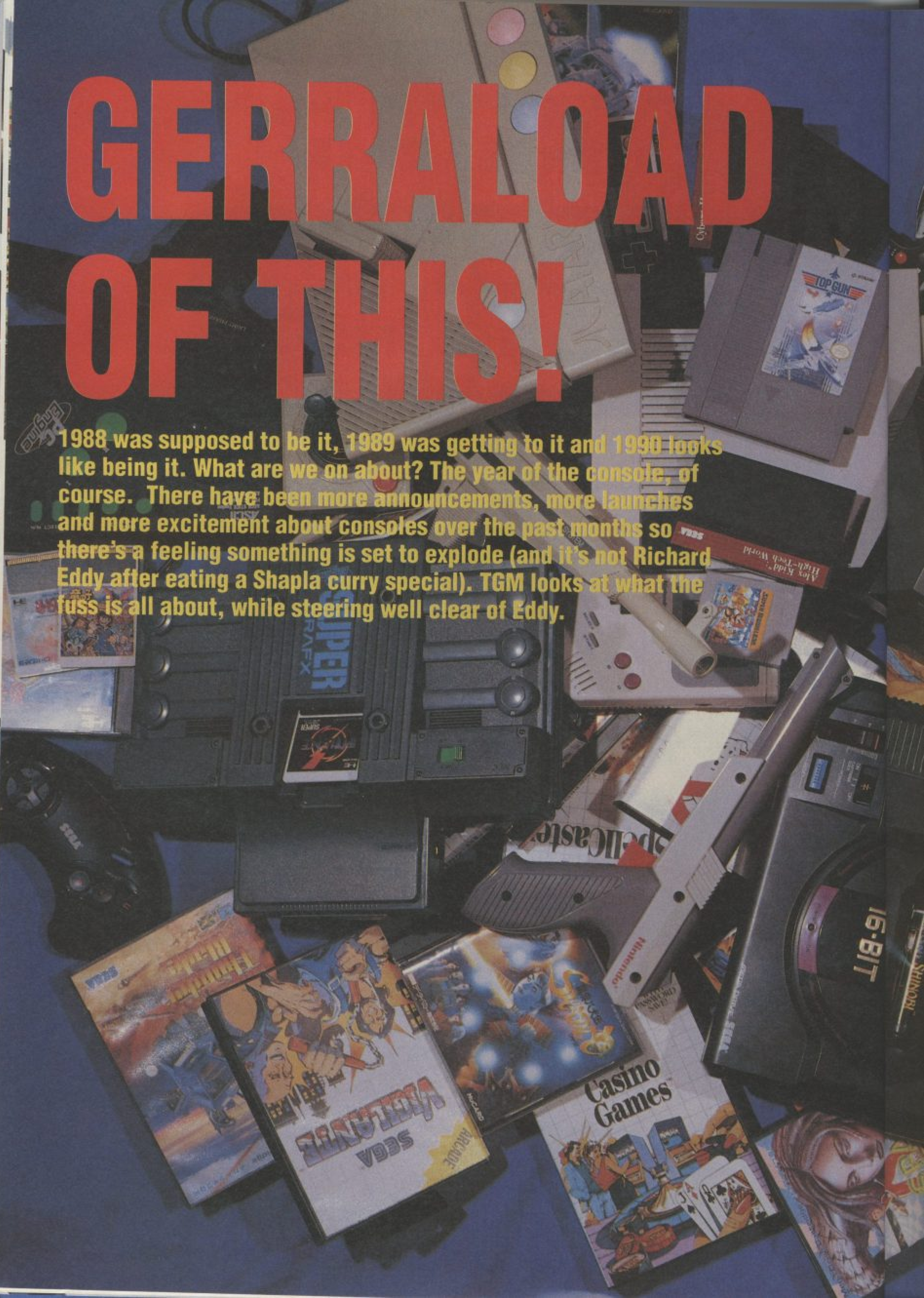
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GERRALOAD OF THIS!

1988 was supposed to be it, 1989 was getting to it and 1990 looks like being it. What are we on about? The year of the console, of course. There have been more announcements, more launches and more excitement about consoles over the past months so there's a feeling something is set to explode (and it's not Richard Eddy after eating a Shapla curry special). TGM looks at what the fuss is all about, while steering well clear of Eddy.





America and Japan have long been struck by console fever. Industry pundits reckon the UK is long overdue for an incurable case of consolitis. While many are fearing the home computer has had its day as far as entertainment goes, the soothsayers of the leisure market reckon consoles are about to go supernova.

Back in the heady days when the C64 and Spectrum were big news, there was always the threat of a new generation of super home computers just round the corner. Indeed, rumours about the Amiga and Atari ST were being floated as early as 1983. Now that the 16-bit machines are big news, the rumour mill has closed down. What are the next generation of super home computers going to be? Sure, Atari and Commodore are going to continue upgrading their 16-bit machines, but just how exciting are 68030-based Amigas (A3000) and STs (TT)? Better graphics and better sound at what cost? £2000 plus! For something that's going to be used for entertainment the price is prohibitive.

Sadly no other manufacturer has even hinted at the possibility of a reasonably-priced next-generation home computer. Come to that, no grossly-priced machines have been mentioned either.

The home computer is by no means dead, and is likely never to die. However, the use for home machines is going to change. The trend has already started. Like it or not, the Spectrum, C64, Amstrad CPC and other 8-bit machines are predominantly used for games playing. The current generation of 16-bit machines are used both for productivity and entertainment. Whatever comes next will have an even stronger leaning towards productivity. Eventually, perhaps, home computers will be used solely for running applications.

So what of entertainment? Is is dead? Far from it. Games players have been bombarded by a neverending onslaught of tempting new game consoles. Some of these machines go far beyond the capabilities of any existing home computer, and even give certain arcade machines a run for their money.

Because some consoles pack such an almighty punch on the gameplaying front — providing sensational sound, detailed and colourful graphics, addictive gameplay and often the ultimate gaming environment — and are much cheaper than their home computer cousins, there has been a mass migration of late towards these temples of temptation.

ACTION STATIONS

Why fight it? If you want the ultimate for playing games, you're going to need a console.

At present the Nintendo Entertainment System and Sega Master System are the sensations that are sweeping the nation. Although these two are only 8-bit machines, they have the advantage of absolutely enormous software bases. In the States and Japan the number of titles is phenomenal. The reason being that the number of users is extraordinary. Nintendo, for instance, claims one in every four households in the States owns a NES console.

Over here the ownership of Segas and Nintendos is on the rise. A few months back, for the second time in the Gallup software chart history, a Sega game (Wonder Boy III) climbed high in the charts. Sega distributors, Virgin Mastertronic, are confident that around 200,000 machines are already in use in the UK.

Even though these machines are gaining a large following in this country, it's their 16-bit brethren that are causing excitement. The Sega Mega Drive, which is available only as a grey import at present, is currently top of the desirable charts. With its stunning audio visuals, the Mega Drive makes Amiga games look silly. And often leaves coin-ops looking overrated.

NEC'S PC Engine is another choice console — its compact size, huge number of titles and sophisticated hardware make it a firm favourite with game players. Sadly NEC is doing nothing about importing it into Great Britain — it is, however, available from grey importers. The Engine is huge in Japan and has hundreds of games on nifty credit card-size cartridges. A CD-ROM unit is also available; around 50 titles are available on this silver medium. The Japs are so crazy for this machine that several versions in differing styles are available (see Our Man in Japan elsewhere in this issue).

Just available in this country is the Super Grafx, commonly called the PC Engine II, which provides more powerful graphics potential for games programmers. All existing Engine games are compatible with the Super Grafx. However, there's only one game specifically designed for it so far.

Atari and Nintendo almost transformed entertainment simultaneously with the introduction of the hand-held Atari Lynx and Nintendo Game Boy consoles. For palm-top pleasure these are unbeatable.

NEXT STAGE

So much for what's available. It's what's coming that will transform your perception of what's truly possible as far as home entertainment goes. There are no fewer that five consoles on the way.



■ Here's colour in your hand. Atari's Lynx boasts a resolution of 160 by 102, a palette of 4096 colours with a maximum 16 colours onscreen, stereo sound and — like the Game Boy — uses plug-in cartridges.

Without doubt, the action over the next few years will be coming from the consoles.

Two more hand-helds are imminent: a colour version of the Game Boy and a palm-top PC Engine. Little is known about the colour version of the Game Boy or when, and if, it will make an appear --ance. The portable PC Engine, how-ever, was on show at the recent CES in Las Vegas.

The mini machine will, amazingly enough, run existing Engine games. It has a three-inch LCD screen, in-built speaker and a stereo headphone jack. NEC is to decide whether or not to include a video output which would allow the hand-held to be hooked up to a TV. Anticipated price is £199.

Much has been said about the Konix console and little seen of it. It has been hailed as the ultimate games machine, offering interactivity like you've never experienced before. What makes the Konix so unique is that it can be moulded into the shape that best suits the game you're playing. For instance, its control mechanism can imitate the steering wheel of a racing car, the yoke of an aeroplane, or the handlebars of a motorbike.

Unlike other game consoles whose software comes on some form of memory card, Konix's machine will accept disk-based software (originally planned at £14.99) into its 3.5-inch double-sided disk drive.

The Konix contains a very powerful 160-pin slab of silicon known as an ASIC (Application Specific Integrated Circuit). It looks after just about everything, including graphics and sound. Apart from the ASIC there's nothing else to get excited about. Well, not much. There's 256K of RAM and an 8086 processor clocked at 6MHz.

A special chair can be plugged into the £200 or so Konix which moves according with what's happening onscreen. In effect, the Konix brings a whole new era of game playing into the home — that of interactive stimulation.

Commodore too is getting in on the console frenzy that has taken Japan and America by storm (and looks like doing the same over here) by announcing a CD-ROM based system due for release either late this year or early next year. At the moment there are no technical details on the machine, and it may well use existing Amiga technology.

Finally, the most exciting console to be announced so far: the 16-bit Nintendo or Super Famicom. The current 8-bit Nintendo can have 16 colours onscreen from a palette of 512. The Super Nintendo has a palette of 32,768 colours and can have up to 256 colours onscreen. Resolution is a crisp 512 pixels by 448. It's possible to have 128 sprites, up to 64 pixels square in size, onscreen simultaneously. Hardware zooms and rotations also add to the machine's incredible processing power.

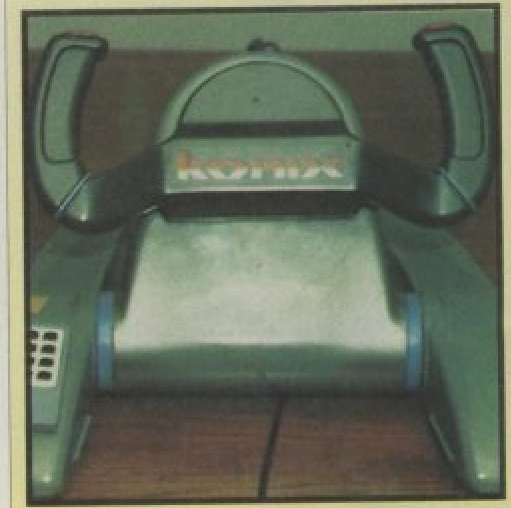
The Super Famicom's official launch date is continuously being put back; Nintendo evidently want to get this machine right. Many would argue it is right now. However, expect it by the end of this year.

It's all very well having a sophisticated console, but hardware with little or no software is useless. Over the page you'll discover the TGM guide to the best console software together with an indication of the number of titles available for each machine. ●





■ Nintendo's Super Famicom. The future of console entertainment. FM stereo sound synthesis, over 32,000 colours, very high resolution and phenomenal processing power. Just wait until the games arrive.



■ Konix's £230 console – together with the moving chair, light gun and helicopter control mechanism – promises to revolutionise home entertainment. It's been touted as the nearest thing to an interactive entertainment system. Numerous developers including Jez San and his Arganouts, Vivid Images Development, Logotron, Entertainment International and Jeff Minter have long been working on software for the machine. The delay in the console's launch has caused concern among developers; many refusing to continue work until they have firmer assurances of a release date from Konix. The machine was supposed to be released before Christmas, then just after the new year and now...



❶ SEGA MASTER SYSTEM

Distributed by Virgin Mastertronic, the Sega is available from most chains and high street computer stores. Price starts around £80 for the basic system. The Sega is an 8-bit machine offering a pallet of 64 colours, a resolution of 256 pixels by 192 pixels and three-channel mono sound. Hundreds of titles available for it.

❷ NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Toys 'R' Us and a selected range of high street chains sell the 8-bit Nintendo. Expect to pay around £100 for the system. Apart from Atari's VCS, the Nintendo is possibly the most basic console of the lot. This doesn't deter the Americans or Japanese who eat, breath and sleep Nintendo. Hundreds of software titles exist.

❸ NINTENDO GAME BOY

Although Japan and America have been officially treated to the Game Boy, Nintendo is only to launch the hand-held in the run up to Christmas. It is available now, along with an ever-growing range of games, from mail order grey importers. You can grease your palm with a Game Boy for around £100.

❹ ATARI VCS

One of the first consoles to appear — and is now showing its age considerably. You can pick up a system for around £50. Many high street chains are selling them off cheap as Atari gives dealers a VCS with every ST. A palette of 16 colours is offered, together with a resolution of 160 pixels by 192 pixels and three mono sound channels. Software is very hard to come by.

❺ NEC PC ENGINE

Sadly, NEC has no intention of bringing this fine machine to the UK; grey importers like Micromedia can sell you a machine mail order. It's also possible to get the machine through some independent retailers, and Virgin Megastore and Hamley's. Prices hover around £200. Although the Engine has an 8-bit processor, it has incredible graphics and sound hardware. A palette of 512 colours is available. Resolution is 320 by 256 and six stereo sound channels are available. Lots of software is available, but most is in Japanese.

❻ SEGA MEGA DRIVE

Virgin plans to introduce this console around September of this year for around £200, but many grey importers are offering it now for the same price. It's undoubtedly the best games machine at present. It blows away home computers and consoles simply with its sheer processing power and sophisticated custom hardware. Only a handful of titles are available, but each is a monster classic.

❼ NEC SUPER GRAFX

Another machine that is only available mail order. The Grafx is simply an enhanced PC Engine. The console's name tells you what has been boosted; the graphics. Essentially the graphics chip makes it possible to move more things more quickly onscreen. It's not cheap at a few pennies after £300. Only one game shows off the Grafx's capabilities. However, all Engine games run perfectly.



WHERE TO GO, WHO TO SEE

Having difficulty getting hold of the latest releases for your machine? Here are the numbers you need to know...
PC Engine: Micromedia, (0743) 271792.
Turbo Grafx: Supervision, (0602) 475151.
Sega Mega Drive: Mention, (0803) 606146.
Nintendo Game Boy: Telegames, (0533) 880445.
Sega Master System: Virgin Mastertronic, (01) 7278070.
Atari Lynx: Atari, (0753) 333444.
Nintendo Entertainment System: Nintendo, 0473 225941.
Most of the above suppliers also handle other formats listed. Ring to find out the full range of coverage.

THE CARTS YA GOTTA GET

Life isn't worth living without the following console games. TGM comes clean and lists its fave raves.

MEGA DRIVE

The Super Shinobi — the best version of this game to have appeared. Classic one player hack-'em-up. Excellent graphics, silky-smooth parallax scrolling, sensational sound, devastating gameplay... yes, we really like this one,

Golden Axe — two player hack and slay game that is as good as the arcade game. Fast, furious and fantastic. Lots of action and, not common in most games, humour. Beating the meat out of your opponents (or your chum) is hilarious.

Altered Beast — one of the early Mega Drive games, and one of the best. Like the coin-op, the action is non-stop. One or two players can storm around a horizontally-scrolling screen duffing up anything that gets in the way. And then there are the end-of-level monsters...

NINTENDO

Life Force — better known as Salamander over here, Life Force is a tremendous one or two-player shoot-'em-up featuring three horizontally and three vertically scrolling levels. The graphics and gameplay are something else.

Super Mario Brothers II — the follow up to the game that undoubtedly has done more for Nintendo sales than any other game. It's a huge platform-style hunt and kill game featuring countless levels, hidden sections, monsters, bonuses and treasures. **Mega Man** — another huge game in which you must defeat an array of evil enemy bosses. There are characters like Iceman, Elecman, Cutman, Bombman, Fireman and Gutsman who will dish out their own style of vile death-dealing blow.

GAME BOY

Tetris — some of the hand-helds come with this game, but as it's so good it deserves a mention. Slotting one shape into others hardly sounds stimulating or exciting yet that is all Tetris is; so simple and so addictive.

Super Mario Land — the continuation of poor Mario's saga is as good as any other computer or console version. The formula may be getting old, but it's certainly not getting tired. Puzzles, monsters, traps, secret rooms and more. It's one helluva world to explore.

Alleway — the list of Breakout clones is endless, but the game genre still doesn't lose its appeal. Alleway provides you with a whole new range of brick-bashing challenges. Besides bouncing a ball against brick and bat, you must contend with scrolling tiles, falling tiles and bonus screens.

PC ENGINE

R-Type — horizontal blasting action like you've never experienced before. Tremendous graphics, sound and gameplay combine to provide one of the most spectacular conversions of this coin-op classic. Huge end-of-level guardians, lots of levels and a non-stop onslaught of enemy craft provide you with a very big challenge.

Galaga 88 — Probably the most memorable game of the first wave of Engine releases. It features classic gameplay, brilliant sound, and loads of options. Waves of aliens swoop down to you, while you must pick out which ones are dangerous and which could double the size (and firepower) of your ship. The most accessible console game around.

Wonder Boy III — Wonder Boy has always come off second best to Mario in the console stakes — till now. The CD-ROM version of the latest in the series is more arcade biased than the Mario Bros games, and features the best computer game soundtrack around — on glorious compact disc, or course!

SEGA

Shinobi — of all the computer and consoles versions, this is the best conversion of the fantastic arcade game. Shuriken, samurai and other shmuck to avoid as you journey through troubled lands to restore order. Excellent gameplay.

Vigilante — yet again the best conversion of the coin-op makes an appearance on the Sega. The idea is to rescue your girlfriend, Maria, from street thugs. Numerous levels of chain-wielding fun are to be had as you battle all manner of gruesome opponents. The graphics are outstanding.

Wonder Boy III — fans of the arcade game will be disappointed to note that this version has nothing to do with the coin-op; apart, of course, for the name. Instead you must guide the lad with the pointy ears through various locations searching for bits of parchment.

COMPETITION

WIN! WIN! WIN!
A SUPER GRAFX!

THANX TO MICROMEDIA



We brought you the first stunning pictures of the PC Engine and now you've seen the latest Japanese games machine — the Super Grafx , the mindblowing PC Engine II! So who better to collaborate with than the first UK company to import the PC Engine, Shropshire-based Micromedia. Micromedia's version of the new NEC Super Grafx is so impressive (see page 82) that we're giving one away! This is undoubtedly one of the world's best consoles and here's how you can get your hands on it...

Scattered around the page are screen shots of five whizzo PC Engine games. Just identify each picture, placing your answers on the form below, fill in the tie-breaker limerick, and send off the form to the usual address and you could be playing Japan's hottest machine very soon!

THE ULTIMATE ENGINE EXPERIENCE

1...

2...

3...

4...

5...

There was a young man from Japan
Who was a PC Engine fan
He liked games in space
Especially Battle Ace

....

PAL ❒ SCART ❒ MORE INFO ON THE PC ENGINE/SUPER GRAFX ❒
(PLEASE TICK BOX)

Rush off your entry to: SUPER GRAFX COMPO, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB. Closing date March 8.

Guaranteed Window Seat.

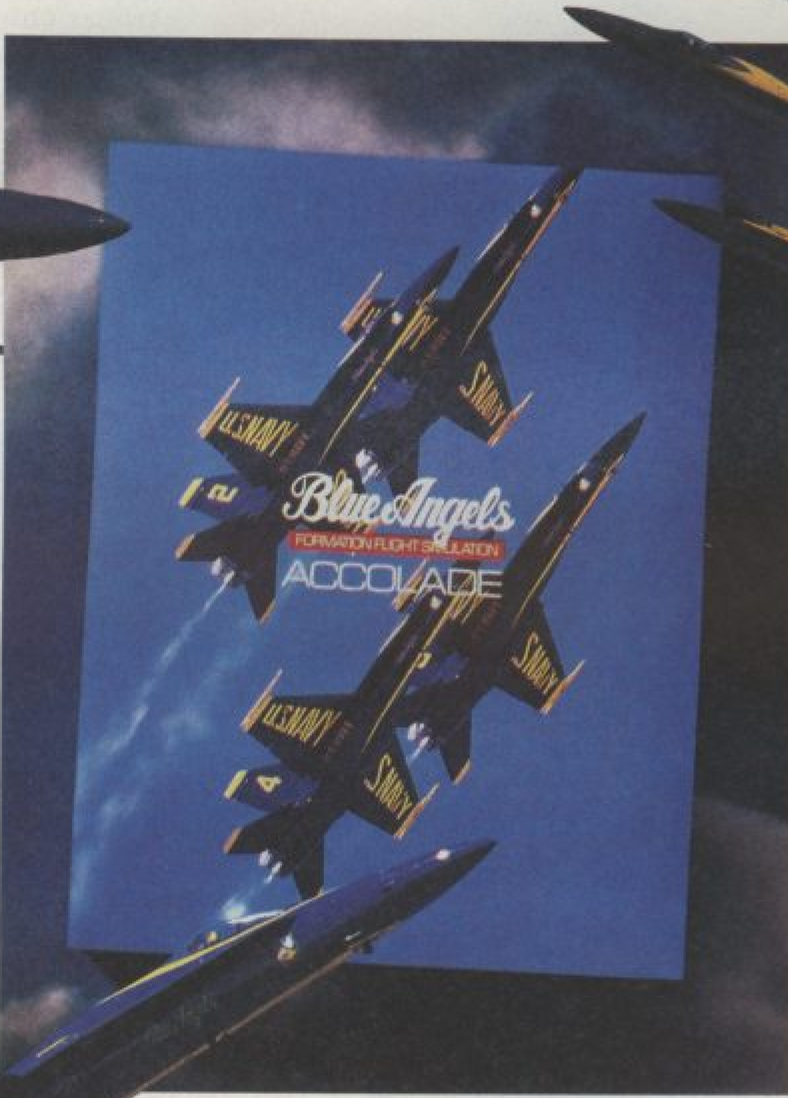
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Actual game screens from IBM PC EGA version of the game. Other versions may vary.

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SYNCHRO

REVIEW

My God! It's War!





It most certainly is! TGM enters into battle with this month's crop of software and checks out what's hot and what's not. We take charge of a platoon in Ocean's The Lost Patrol and discover the best of British are beating America's Cinemaware at their own game. And rising high from Japan comes The Super Shinobi, natty ninja action happening on Sega's Mega Drive. Guiding you through the software jungle this month are TGM's very own Star Players: Warren Lapworth (likes dressing up as a ninja — amongst other things, blubbing his way through Radio One's Our Tune every day), Mark Caswell (likes caffine poisoning, picking fights with filing cabinets) and this month's guest reviewer is 'Stunning' Stuart Wynne (38-32-33, likes working with children — that's why he's editor of ZZAP!). Challenge the action!

TGM STAR PLAYER

Check this out! It's the new Star Player logo — when you see this you'll know the game concerned comes with TGM's utmost approval and should not be missed!

Mega Drive games supplied by PC Engine Supplies
PC Engine games supplied by Micromedia and PC Engine Supplies

GAMES INDEX

INFOGRAMES SHOW THEIR METTLE

FULL METAL PLANETE

INFOGRAMES

The Full Metal Planete of the title has metal ore mining companies throughout the galaxy drooling at the thought of it. However, the find of the century may not last much longer, as in just 25 days the whole planet will be flooded. Time is of the essence, so one of the top mining companies, Cobra Steel, has sent its very best pilots to grab as much ore as possible in the 25 days left before The Big Flood swamps everything...

Two to four players can take part in the scramble for valuable minerals, with the computer playing as many players as you want. Each player is assigned a flag, which you can design yourself with a built-in graphic utility.

Following flag selection the strategy screen appears, showing a map of the entire world, 37 by 23 hexagons. You must choose where to land your freighter, which cannot then take off until either turn 21 or 25. While landed you can control your units through the close-up screen — where all the attractive graphics are.



PUTTING ON THE HEX

The aim of the game is simply to have the most units of ore and vehicles stored inside your freighter (and any captured freighters) when you blast off.

Actual gameplay is divided into 25 turns (days). During every turn each player has 15 energy points and must use some or all of them within three minutes, the time limit for an individual's turn. Every action, from moving a boat one hex to turning ore into a supertank, costs points. Five or ten units of energy can be saved for use in the next turn.

Inside your freighter are Destroyers (attack boats, tanks, supertanks, and fixed turrets — your freighter has three of these). For these to destroy an enemy vehicle two of them must be within range of it. Normal range is two hexes, but supertanks can reach three hexes — as can normal tanks on mountains.

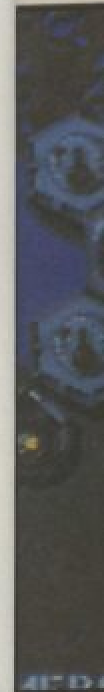
In addition, if two destroyers get directly beside an enemy vehicle it can be captured, coming under your control. Moreover, destroyers can capture enemy freighters. If this happens that player is out of the game and you take over all his units.

There are also Transporters such as barges (which can carry four items across water) and crabs (two items across land). Transporters can also pick up the vital blocks of ore which are scattered across the world.

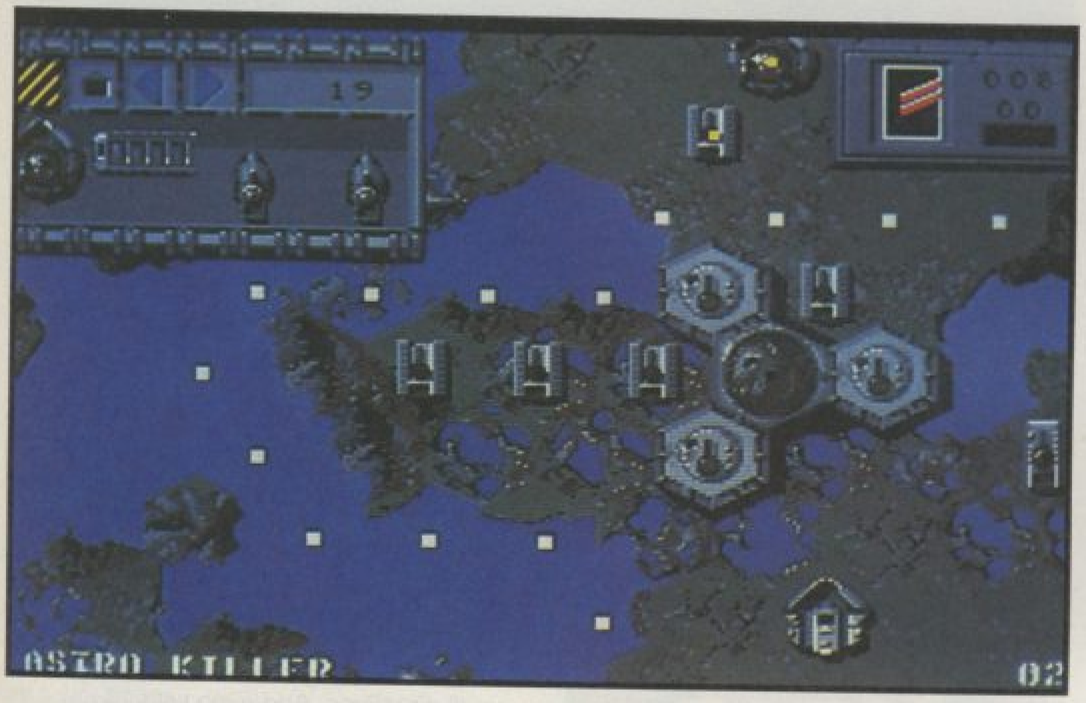
But probably the most important vehicle is the weather hen (!). This amazing 'beast' can turn ore into tanks, crabs, or pontoons (to bridge rivers). It can also predict the next tide — crucial as high tides can immobilise your land vehicles, while low tides do the same for ships.











GAME	**FULL METAL PLANETE**
PRODUCER	**INFOGRAMES**
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£24.99
ATARI ST	£24.99
PC	£24.99

AMIGA 85%

An average title sequence leads to a neatly presented game with useful options, particularly the flag designer — having your own banner to fight under helps you to become involved and identify with your forces. Graphics are nothing special but are detailed, authentic-looking and get you into the feel of things. The soundtrack is a weird but pleasing intro tune plus good metallic (of course) in-game effects.

ATARI ST 85%

Apart from the mouse pointer — black instead of white — and perhaps a tiny bit less bass in the intro tune, the ST game is identical to the Amiga one. The in-game sound FX and graphics are exactly the same, and the flag designer just as much fun. As with the Amiga game most of the options and functions are menu-driven, making it very easy to get into, but there are a few keys which make reading the manual worthwhile. In conclusion, technically unamazing, but very atmospheric and a million times better presented than most war games.

BOARD GAME PLUS

Full Metal Planete is yet another boardgame conversion but, rather than the usual simple and commercial type, it's a strategy game. That will put many games-players off but easy-to-grasp rules, a rigid three minute time limit and attractive presentation (including a free full metal crab!) can seduce even the most action-hungry person. Pop-up, icon-driven menus make all aspects of the game easily accessible and are much more fun than messing around with the lead pieces in the £30 boardgame!

While simple to understand, the rules make for some very challenging games — while the basic elements are easy to learn, the intricacies of combat and mining prove difficult to master. The computer players are tough and have their own varied strategies but it's more amusing to battle it out with friends.

Full Metal Planete is a fine conversion of a well designed board game and while strategy experts, like our own Paul 'Rigsby' Rigby, may find it a touch on the shallow side, it's perfect for those of you who are new to this type of game. If you always wanted to try strategy but were too afraid to ask, go for it. Now's the time to broaden your horizons.

Stuart Wynne

CHECKING OUT THE PICTURES



In this box (above): the map screen displays the firing zone of your units, while (far left), it reveals the precious white one. Bottom centre: checking on enemy units before you make your crucial moves. Left centre: Iron Guts Morla blows an enemy boat out of the water. Right centre: deployong units around your freighter base — bad planning can ruin your chances of success. Top: Boom! Another boat suffers at the hands of the Good Ship TGM.

Welcome to the House of Fun

DR PLUMMET'S HOUSE OF FLUX

Microillusions

Dr Plummet has been hailed a genius and an evil madman in one breath. One thing's for sure, he's a weird cookie. His attire consists of purple-striped, flared trousers, yellow plaid jacket and wide psychedelic tie (man). And his actions are often as dubious as his dress sense.

He claims to have contacted aliens and constructed weapons for them, and then he tells the Earth that the aliens will invade in six months. Though, for a price, he will help mankind defend themselves against impending invasion. Even after six peaceful months the governments of the world are still convinced that something will happen. Word leaks out that Dr Plummet is working on a secret weapon called the Acme-Contort-A-Warp that would destroy the aliens once and for all.

But the Doc won't sell, so as a member of the Special Strike Force you must infiltrate the House of Flux and find the mad professor. On your way you must also pick up stranded pilots (six in each location) who've previously failed on the mission you're about to undertake.

As you board your ship, Plummet's Progress, you amuse yourself with the thought that most of the ship's components were designed by the man himself. The engines (Plummet's Patented Zoom Kings) are capable of moving the ship at light speeds and overcoming immense gravitational pulls. The shielding system (Snuffer Rebuffer) will stop dead any laser bolt or bullet fired at you (though you'll lose of a fair bit of fuel in the process).



TGM STAR PLAYER

Prepare yourself for the weirdest trip of your life. There are 28 levels split into four missions (levels of difficulty). The design of the game is very similar to the classic *Thrust*. Strong gravitational forces pull you in all directions. And even with 15 ships the limited amount of fuel isn't enough. The alien forces are also after the Doc's invention, so alien gun turrets are scattered around the Doc's house.

Apart from the points scored from blasting aliens and collecting your chums, secret bonuses on the completion of a level can also be yours. One thing's for sure, though, this will be the trip of your life. Each screen layout is as crazy as the last. And each has a completely different gravitational pull. It's probably best to keep your eye on the scenery and forget about the points.

Mark Caswell



Left: the evil Dr Plummet's face grins sickeningly from the background of the first level, where you're about to rescue an astronaut.

Above: the strange roller-coaster effect of level two is very disorinetating.

Above right: the walls are as hard as they look!

Right: careful! Mind you don't cut those corners.

GAME **DR. PLUMMET'S HOUSE OF FLUX**	
PRODUCER **MICROILLUSIONS**	
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£24.95

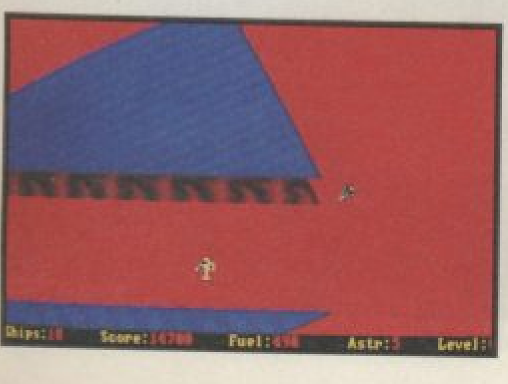
AMIGA 89%

Graphically, I've never seen anything this mind-warping (whilst in a legal state of mind). Some of the backdrops will have those of a nervous imposition feeling for the sick bags. The game isn't recommended for those who easily suffer migraines. Some levels are visually overpowering, whilst others are so complicated or move at such a pace that you'll have trouble sleeping afterwards. The game will run on an A500 without any problems. However, those of you with a 1Mb machine will get the squishy-squashy sounds that make the game even weirder. There are also numerous scoreboards to keep the competitive fun lasting for many months. Totally recommended.



UPS WITH THE DOWNS

In the dim distant past the first two games in the arcades to feature gravitational force (and inertia) as a playing element were *Lunar Lander* and *Space War*. Both were revamped in many guises for the burgeoning Spectrum market. They were all pretty basic until 1986 when *Thrust* (Firebird £1.99) appeared on the C64. Two years later this was followed by the disappointing *Thrust II*. Probably the best of the lot was *Oids*. And now we've *Dr Plummet's House of Flux* — probably the hardest, most complicated and definitely weirdest of the lot.



Vengeance is mine!

VENDETTA

SYESTEM 3

Just like a TV movie plot. Some terrorists have captured a professor and his beautiful daughter, and are forcing him to make a bomb for them. With this they intend to hold countries to ransom and take over the world. Failure to comply with these demands will result in harm to the girl.

As a renowned mercenary, a video recording of the girl's kidnapping falls into your hands. You are so shocked by what you see that, as a personal vendetta, you decide to attempt a rescue. All the normal bargaining procedures have been used up, and there's only one hour till the terrorists execute the girl.

You've heard that the gang are hiding out in a warehouse on the docklands. And this is where you start your mission. On arrival you encounter some hoods, but a bit of nifty footwork and a few slashes with your stick and the hoods' trousers begin to flash (!!). This denotes that they will soon slump to the ground and disappear in a puff of smoke due to the suicide device tied to their waist. They're no use to you dead, though. Get searching the rooms for clues to where the father and daughter have been moved.

Evidence is usually stored in photographic form at the bottom of the screen. Evidence is essential, otherwise the occasional copper who pops up will have to arrest you.

Attackers are initially unarmed, but later on you'll need to find an AK-47 Kalashnikov or Uzi to deal with them. Once all in the dockland are dealt with, you must drive to the next scene. Being a very successful mercenary, your mode of transport is a very plush Ferrari F-40. Even on trips between locations enemy cars and copters hassle you. These can easily be disposed of with your onboard machine guns and SAM missiles.

The next scene is a disused army barracks where yet more evidence is to be found (along with some very useful gunmen). Once this little collection of bad dudes has been dealt with, you're off again, and on your way to rescue the girl. You find out she's being kept aboard a plane. Annoyingly, she's attached to a booby-trapped bomb (silly girl). One false move and it's fried fingers. On her release, though, there's no time to waste as you must zoom off to the park where the boffin professor is being kept.

Vendetta contains an addictive mix of two game styles. A fairly decent road racing game and a similarly effective Last Ninja-type stage (haven't we seen enough of this from System 3, though?). As the time limit ticks away the action gets faster and more furious.

Mark Caswell

GAME **VENDETTA**	
PRODUCER **SYSTEM 3**	
VERSIONS	
SPECTRUM	£9.99/£14.99
C64	£9.99/£14.99
AMSTRAD	£9.99/£14.99
ATARI ST	£19.99
AMIGA	£24.95

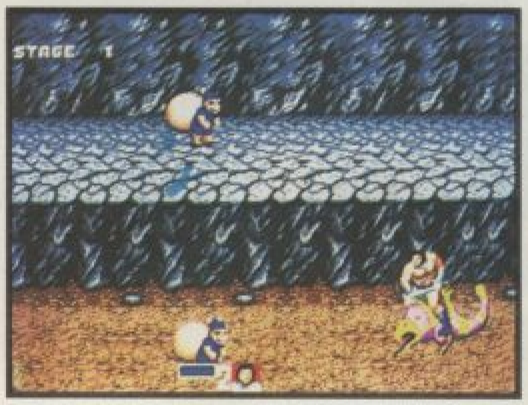
C64 93%

***Vendetta* may be tough but it's certainly playable. It's not all about blowing up everything, though, requiring much planning and caution. There are numerous fiendish puzzles to solve and plenty of villains out to stop you. The race sections are much better than both *Chase HQ* and *Out Run* on the 64, with the locations having all the detail you'd expect of a *Last Ninja* game. There's also a great video sequence at the start, designed by Tony Hager. Along with that the title tune's triff and in-game spot effects of a high standard.**



STAN'S THE MAN

Stan Schembri, the C64 programmer, started on games at the age of 16. He wrote two utility programs and an unreleased game for Bug-Byte, then went to Palace where he wrote *Cauldron I* and *II* and *Barbarian — The Ultimate Warrior* before moving on to System 3, for whom he has written *Tusker* and now *Vendetta*.





■ Gimme back my grapes, you swine, or I'll stick a spike in your head!

It's another Golden moment from...

GOLDEN A

Death Adder is a mass butcher. Not of legs of lamb, but of people. A vicious and evil dictator who has kidnapped the king and his daughter. He has also executed various members of your family — which makes him *very* unpopular indeed.

With thoughts of revenge you (and a friend if you have any still alive!) must tread a long and dangerous path Adder's castle in the mountains, avenge your kin and rescue the royal hostages. Under what guise should you proceed? You have three to choose from: Ax Battler the Barbarian, Tyris Flare the Amazonian or Gilius Thunderhead the Dwarf — all have their own reasons for revenge. Any of the characters can, along with their specialist weapon, cast magic spells, which are obtainable from small blue jugs (see box). The more jugs you possess, the stronger your spell will be.

You'll need all the magic you can muster (mister) as you confront skeletons, ogres with large clubs, vicious female warriors and the obligatory level big guys.

Often attackers will appear on two-legged mounts. These are either fire breathing dragons or a strange creatures called Chicken Legs. Knock the riders off to gain the mounts, and more importantly a distinct advantage in battle.

The staggering array of moves you possess includes several hefty swings, groin-crunching kicks and strongman throws. The trail to Death Adder's castle is a long and tortuous one, you're going to need all the magic and luck you can lay your hands on.

Golden Axe is originally from an arcade coin-op and contains all the features of the Sega original. You can play with one or two players.

Menu options will also allow you to alter the energy bars, listen to in-game sounds and alter the position of the button functions. Totally customisable and totally addictive — though not too original.

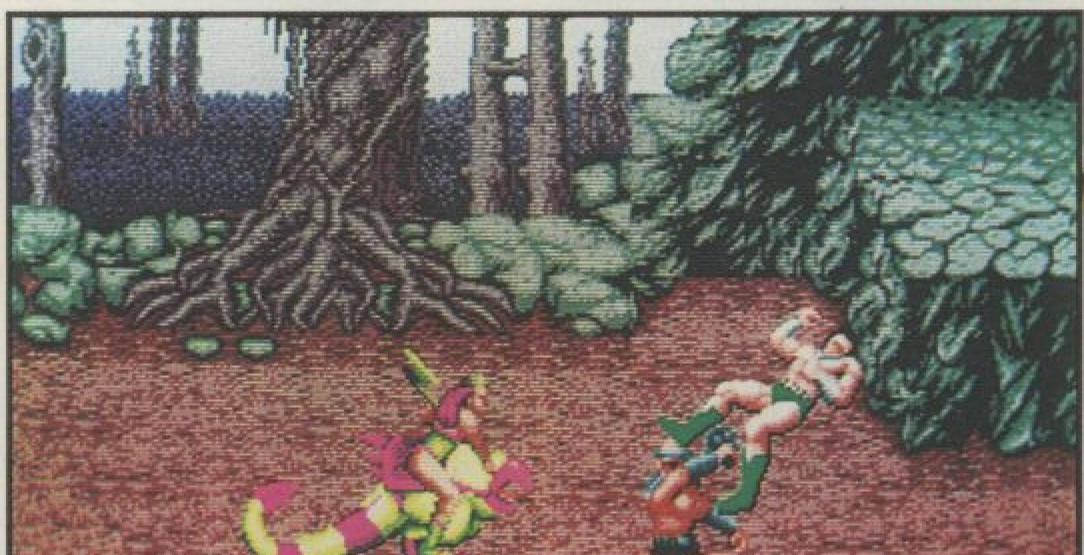
Mark Caswell

THE GOOD GUYS

Ax Battler (Height: 180cm. Weight: 90kg.) A Barbarian whose mother was killed by Death Adder. His favourite weapon is the broadsword and though he isn't quite as nimble on his feet as Gilius or Tyris he's immensely strong. Magical weapon: explosions.

Tyris Flare (Height: 172cm. Weight: you don't ask a lady!) A proud Amazonian who saw her parents murdered by Mr Adder. Her weapon is also a sword, perhaps not quite as cunning as Gilius she is very nimble. Magical weapon: fire.

Gilius Thunderhead (Height: 160cm. Weight: 68kg.) A dwarf whose brother lost his life to the dark cause. His puny size can often fool the enemy as his swift axe-work more than compensates. Magical weapon: lightning.



■ Hey! The sky's supposed to fall on Ckicken Licken; he's not supposed to fall from the sky onto you.

GAME **GOLDEN AXE**
PRODUCER **SEGA**
VERSIONS
SEGA MEGA DRIVE £29.99

MEGA DRIVE 92%

This has to be the most addictive game this month — you're lucky there was plenty of time to write the review! The character sprites are all big and bold, with more than a rainbowful of colours. The pounding soundtrack only adds to the involving and inviting atmosphere of the game. Fast action, superb attention to detail in the fight sequences and some breathtaking magical spells makes *Golden Axe* a must for all arcade action fans.



Sega

BAD DUDES

Dragons There are two types: the blue breathe sheets of flame, the red spit fireballs.
Chicken Legs Strange two-legged creature consists of a head and tail. It uses the latter to whack unwary foes.
Heninger A real he-man character who thinks nothing of laying into his foes with his huge club.
Skeleton Shades of Jason and the Argonauts here with this unwelcome guest from the grave.
Zuboruka A warrior woman whose fighting prowess has impressed Death Adder so much he has allowed her and her sisters to chop up adventurers with their axes.
Death Adder The bad guy himself. The man you love to hate. But does he work for himself, or does *he* just taking orders? Have you found the *real* boss?

Into the fray as a...

BATTLE ACE

HUDSON SOFT

Plot explanations go right out of the window with this game, but *Afterburner* and *Galaxy Force* fans will be familiar with the genre. You control one of the most tip-top secret spacecraft ever created.

Your mission is to patrol seven planets dispersing (killing they mean) any erroneous craft who happen to 'wander' into your airspace. You start on Tellus armed with twin 20mm cannon and twin homing missiles. Ammo is unlimited, which is a good thing because you'll need every bit of weaponry to beat the invaders.

The nasty alien horde attack without mercy in a wide selection of imaginative looking craft. The best tactic is to take 'em out when they are specks in the distance. Locking on the missiles is simple, just jiggle the control button around until red crosses appear, you can then let rip. Though the cannon can be used for close-up work, but watch out for the missiles that are slung out by the swines.

It's not just the fly boys who attack you, there are all sorts of obstacles, too, intended to prevent your progress: lightning, asteroids, paint-scraping tunnels. If you survive to the end of a level you must face the mothership.

Much effort, skill, planning, strategy... and a bloodyminded destructive nature soon blow them to the seventh ionosphere. Each level contains its own special master ship, requiring a different technique from the last. As such the game addiction lasts for ages.

Warren Lapworth

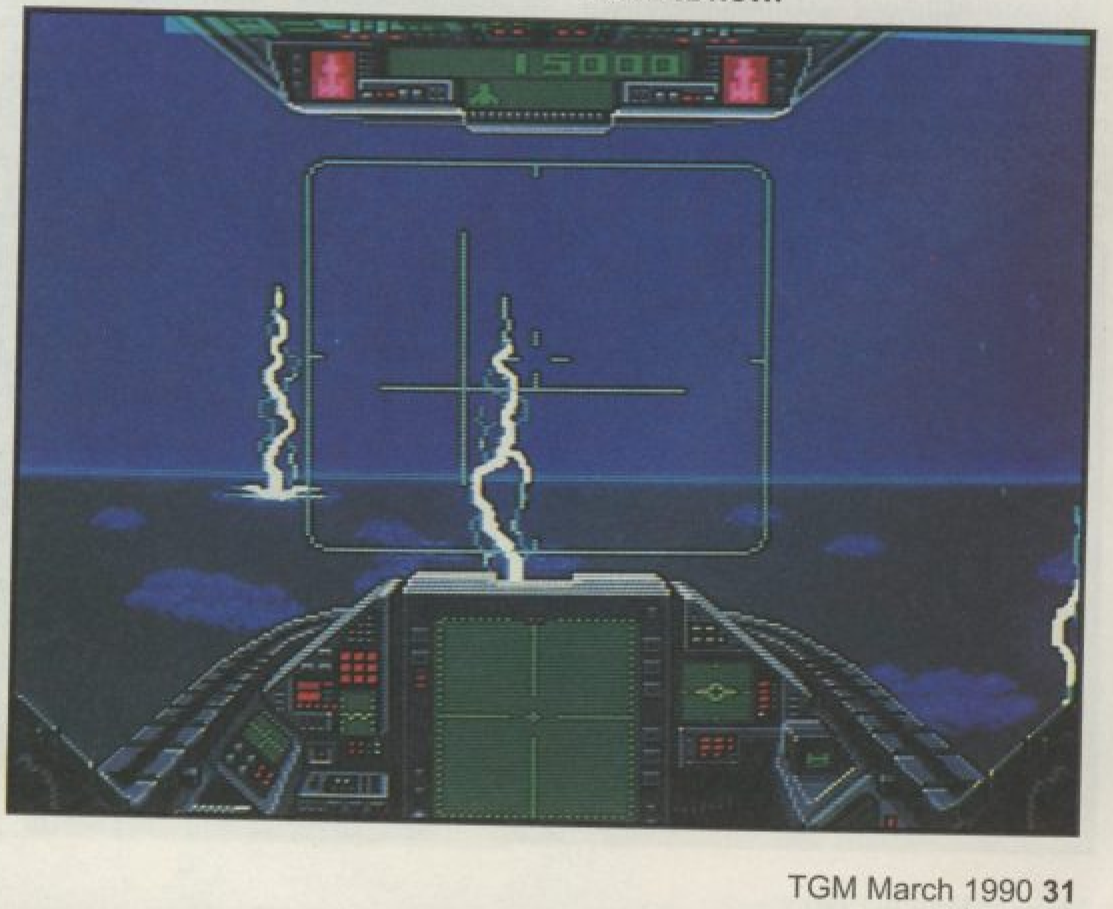
GAME **BATTLE ACE**
PRODUCER **HUDSON SOFT**
VERSIONS
SUPER GRAFX £29.99

SUPER GRAFX 75%

***Battle Ace* has all the makings of a good arcade game: it's tough, fast and the attention to detail is praiseworthy. If, like me, you love Afterburner you'll soon get back into the chair. My only two slight niggles are the death sequence which is far too long, and the massive exhaust trail when a missile is launched, often obscuring the enemy. The Super Grafx will no doubt take off in this country if this game is anything to go by. Although it isn't a 'buy the machine' game like *Elite* (BBC) and *Zarch* (Archimedes) were.**



FOR A FULL REVIEW OF THE NEW PC ENGINE SUPER GRAFX, CHECK OUT PAGE 82 NOW!



■ Lightning strikes all around in a terrifying display of primeval force as you blast your way through everything Hudson Soft can throw your addicted way

Looking for...

THE LOST PATROL

Ocean

The year is 1966. The location is South Vietnam. You are Sergeant Weaver, head of a platoon of crack soldiers on their way back into action. Unfortunately, your platoon is knocked out by an enemy attack, and you and the remaining six survivors must now pool resources and make it safely to your objective. As leader, you must guide your fellow survivors — Blom, Bachman, Cain, Moore, Gomez and Case — through 58 miles of hostile territory, with just enough food to last two days and no way of contacting help. All you have is a map, which warns of Viet Cong troops and villages, and the individual attributes of each member of your team.

Their differing skills, morale and strengths, can be called up from the Morale screen, along with damage. As you go through the game, the soldiers will sustain injuries ranging from minor cuts and bruises to bullet wounds and sometimes death. You can also designate a man to head the march (crocodile fashion) and scouts that can recce the area ahead of you.

As you march along the terrain, the status screen displays what is happening around you. You can control the speed of your march with a pull-down menu, but it is still restricted by the type of terrain you are in. (For instance, you progress slowly in the jungle.) You can move with extreme caution, march at normal speed or zoom along wrecklessly.

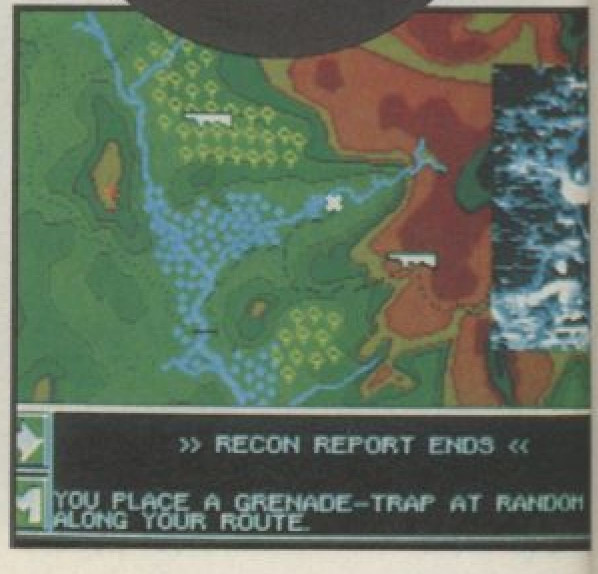


■ No! Nothin' doin' down here either. I don't know where they could have gone. It's all your fault Leroy for burning that forest – they were all contained before. Now we've no hope of findin' them all together. You and Joe go East, me and the rest of the guys will go North.

If you've an idea the gooks are on your tail, you've a couple of booby traps that could welcome them to your trail. For the small take-out place a few grenades or for more destruction set a Claymore mine.

TGM STAR PLAYER





GAME **THE LOST PATROL**
PRODUCER **OCEAN**
VERSIONS
AMIGA........................£24.99

AMIGA 85%

If you're expecting a violent action game, like so many of Ocean's war releases, then forget it. This is one of the new breed of Ocean products. Following on from F-29 Retaliator, The Lost Patrol falls very firmly into the strategy mould. Still, action freaks will have their hands full when it comes to dealing with the gooks. Despite the numerous game features and platoon attributes, the in-game waffle is kept to a minimum.

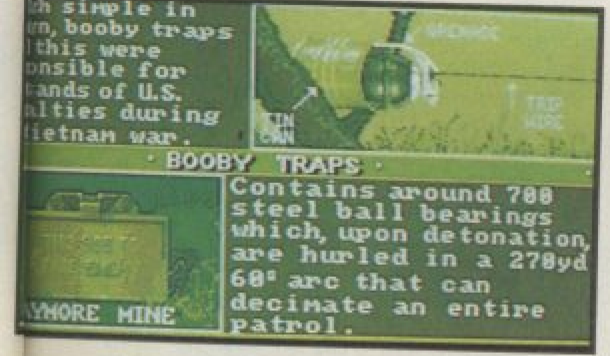
The Amiga version contains 33 inter-action pictures, filling in between the main action on the movement map. Of these, ten are animated with the odd digitised character adding atmosphere (the scenes are taken from the movie Platoon if you're wondering). It's fairly obvious where the initial inspiration for The Lost Patrol came from, but Ocean have produced a game as good as Cinemaware's It Came from the Desert on their first outing into the rarely trodden territory.



■ Nope! I can't see none. Come on, come on out ya little yellow-skinned scum. Show yerselves – ya don't have to worry; we're not going to harm you. Goddamn it! Where are ya'll? C'mon there ain't no need for all this pussy-footin'... we's the good guys. Sheesh! There's nothin' round here. Damn! Sure as hell ain't no woodworm here. Are you sure you got your directions right?

These pleasant contraptions spray out around 700 steel pellets in a wide arc and are capable of wiping out entire platoons.

Ammo and grenades are limited, so talking to villagers and coaxing information out of them is vital for progress. There are five types of interrogation, from Hard Questioning (beating up the locals) to simple asking (without the threats). If you really think they're hiding something, then shoot one of the bystanders and research the area. This usually throws up a tunnel or two.



Due to the small amount of rations, food is a major consideration. The amount handed out can be controlled — normal, half or starvation rations — to keep your team just going along or storing up energy for battle. And your men won't be too happy if they don't get any rest — or even a sleep.

It's not all boring strategy and trekking around. Five arcade sequences add a pleasant change to the rigours of war — and keep you on your toes. Often — too often! — you come across a minefield which must be crawled across. You can scrape at suspicous lumps as you cross, but one slip and BOOOOOOM!

Another action sequence pins down your men with up to to three machine gun nests. Someone has to sneak up and lob some grenades, so choose your man carefully. As you control him, watch for muzzle flashes, pin point them, pull the pin from the grenade and throw it at the offending enemy.

A third arcade scene sees your scout stumbling across a lone VC guarding either ammo or supplies. You challenge him to a man-to-man fight with fists (not realising the guy has a degree in martial arts!).

One scene places you behind a wall hiding from a platoon of gooks. So CAREFULLY pop up and fire a few rounds or throw a grenade. Get back down quickly, though, or you may find yourself with a very unpleasant centre parting (straight through your head).

The final action segment places you on the edge of a village. Several snipers are taking pot shots at you from the windows of the houses, so again watch for the muzzle flashes and pick them off. Some of the enemy are great shots, whilst other wobble all over the place, and would have trouble hitting a traffic jam on the M25.

Of course, you may never see some of these sequences. They only occur when certain situations arise.

However, I can guarantee, you're bound to come across the Viet Cong somewhere in the game. And when you do, you'll know it!

Mark Caswell

IT SHOULDN'T HAPPEN TO A VET

With the average age of a soldier in Vietnam only 19, no war has ever create as much controversy. No-one will deny now that the American made many mistakes, but, oddly enough, it is the Americans who have been digging up the war ever since. Wallowing in self-pity, perhaps? It is hard for us Brits to comprehend.

The Iron Triangle they called it, miles of dense jungle, in which the Viet Cong lived and were used to. The Americans encountered situations they had never seen before. Indeed, a manual was published that explained jungle warfare, they were just not prepared for the dense terrain or an enemy that appeared and disappeared like lightning.

The Yanks learned several valuable lessons: short hair cuts were a bad move because sweat got in the eyes, leather boots disintegrated within days because of the colossal heat and humidity, and grenades could be lethal to those carrying them. Grenades were carried on the outside of the soldier's pack and on several occasions a branch snagged the pin and set off an explosion. Also, because of the dense foliage and trees a thrown grenade bounced back.

Around 80% of the casualties of the whole Vietnam conflict were caused by booby traps. The Viet Cong were experts at setting them and in such undergrowth were virtually invisible to detection.

It is only recently that the Americans have come to terms with their loses. Despite such eye-opening films as Apocalypse Now and The Deer Hunter, it was only with Oliver Stone's Platoon that the Vietnam story was accepted by the whole world. Soon after, it was followed by a spate of similar genre films, probably the most startling being Stanley Kubrick's Full Metal Jacket. And it doesn't stop there. This year you can see Tom Cruise in Born on the Fourth of July, the story of a crippled Nam vet and his personal battle towards world peace. Like Stone's previous film, Platoon, Fourth of July is being heralded as the film of the year.



AiCom CORPORATION

GAME **USA PRO BASKETBALL**
PRODUCER **AICOM CORPORATION**
VERSIONS
PC EGINE £29.95

PC ENGINE 81%

Most in-game graphics are a little weak. Colours are lacking and the sprites are cartoon stick men with ugly deformed heads (like most Japanese drawings, in fact). They're thick and blockily outlined in black and simply animated. Scrolling is inconsistent but close-up graphics of basket action are excellent drawn and are highly effective, despite few frames of animation. Music is lively and fun but effects are simple noises.

Like most people, my knowledge of basketball doesn't go much further than the Harlem Globetrotters and Teen Wolf. And if you're unfamiliar even with those I give up! Okay, I'm a sympathetic guy. Basketball is a sport where five guys (or six gals!) toss and bounce a ball around a rectangular play area (the court) trying to throw the ball through a hoop (the basket). Weird ain't it?

If you're lucky enough to own a multi-way joypad adaptor, you can play against a friend, but if you can't con a friend into playing — like me — you're more likely to be dribbling against the console. Choosing a team from the eight available — Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Seattle, Honolulu, Miami, Boston and Dallas — a cup tournament (involving all eight teams) or league can be entered, or a one-off exhibition match played. Five players are chosen from your squad of 12, using numeric statistics as a guide, and their positions and tactics (zone, man-to-man or both) set.



Game control is relatively simple. The flashing player is the one under control but can be changed by pressing fire. When in possession, button one passes to the nearest player or in the direction the joypad's being held (towards a player on your side would be useful). Button two makes the player jump, ready to shoot, and a second press actually makes the shot.

For incidents around the basket (known in the trade as a lay-ups and dunks), the view switches to a close-up. If it's to the benefit of your team, you have to press button one as a marker moves across the red section of a coloured bar.

Substitutions can be made and tactical/player changes made under the time restrictions of a time-out.

For team sports, football games are prevalent on computers, baseball games are almost as popular on consoles. Basketball ones have always taken third position but this conversion of the sport should do something to change that. As is the case with most console games, there's high quality presentation and plenty of attention to detail, which leads the player smoothly into the game.

Gameplay is by no means perfect but then team games are always awkward to get into and difficult to master. Playability gradually comes shining through, although excitement never fully develops, mainly due to blocking and defence being almost uncontrollable: if the opposition gets into a good shooting position they're guaranteed to score.

But still, amongst PC Engine owners and particularly fans of team sports, *USA Pro Basketball* is bound to score.

Warren Lapworth

BASKETS BONANZA

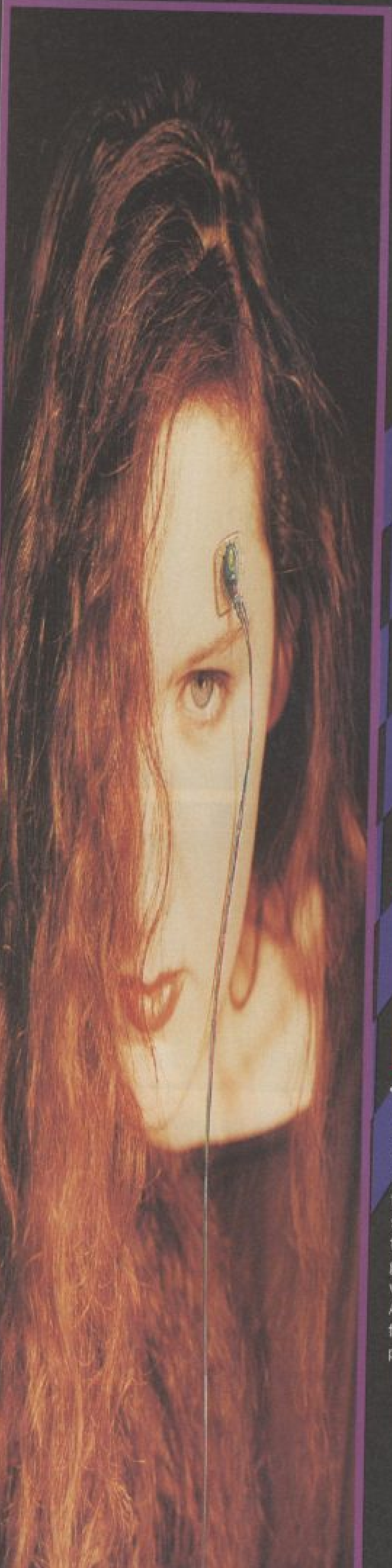
The tricks of the trade apply to the console version as much as to the real game. Try to find a really high chair to stand on while playing. This will give you that all-important height advance over the competition. Nah, just kidding...

Master dunking before any other aspects of the game. Once the opponents have scored, or you've intercepted them, get the ball out of defense as quickly as possible (a fast break). This allows most of the baskets to be scored through dunks — ie, a certain two points. If time's running out a small beeper sounds. On hearing this try a shot at the basket, no matter where you are. There's always a chance that it could go in, and if it does you've probably got three points (if you're shooting outside of the offensive 'D').

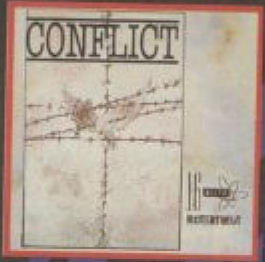


The Japanese cartoon-like sprites are typically ugly stickmen with deformed heads, thick and blockily outlined in black and simply animated, but the game overcomes their shortcomings.

CEREBRAL SOFTWARE



"As the disk loaded, I felt drawn into different reality, an alternative world where I assumed the identity of another"

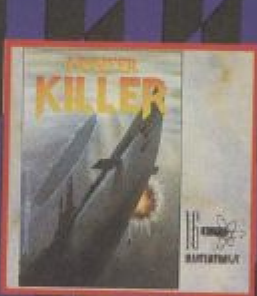




CONFLICT

The Middle East Political Simulation
IBM PC • COMING SOON - Amiga • Atari ST

The Middle East Today is as unstable and dangerous as at any time since the Crusades. The superpowers encourage their 'fighting cocks' and try out military gadgets in the best of conditions. It is the potential cradle of World War III. CONFLICT puts you in a world where military and economic forces combine to simulate the multiple pressures that a national leader is under in a modern nation state. Your aim: to force the collapse of all four neighbouring governments. A frightening and highly realistic wargame.





HUNTER KILLER

Amiga • Atari ST

Experience the reality of commanding an American WWII combat submarine in the South Pacific. Master the controls of your vessel, then embark on a series of missions - from 'search and destroy' sorties to detailed escort duties modelled on real WWII campaigns. With eleven different submarines, fourteen separate missions to attempt, at a range of difficulty levels as well as practise patrols that take place during the day or at night, HUNTER KILLER has a host of features that outclass any other submarine simulation.





GRIMBLOOD

Amiga • Atari ST

Place yourself deep within the walls of Castle Grimblood, here lurks a murderer, who is preying on those who live by and keep the rituals. You as the young Earl, Maximus, must uncover the terrible secret in order that he can unlock the chains of timeless obedience to the rituals of the castle and gain his freedom. If you fail you are certain to fall victim yourself to the stalking assassins knife... A gothic whodunnit, written by Mike Singleton, featuring digitised sound and graphics and promising a different game every load!

16 BLITZ
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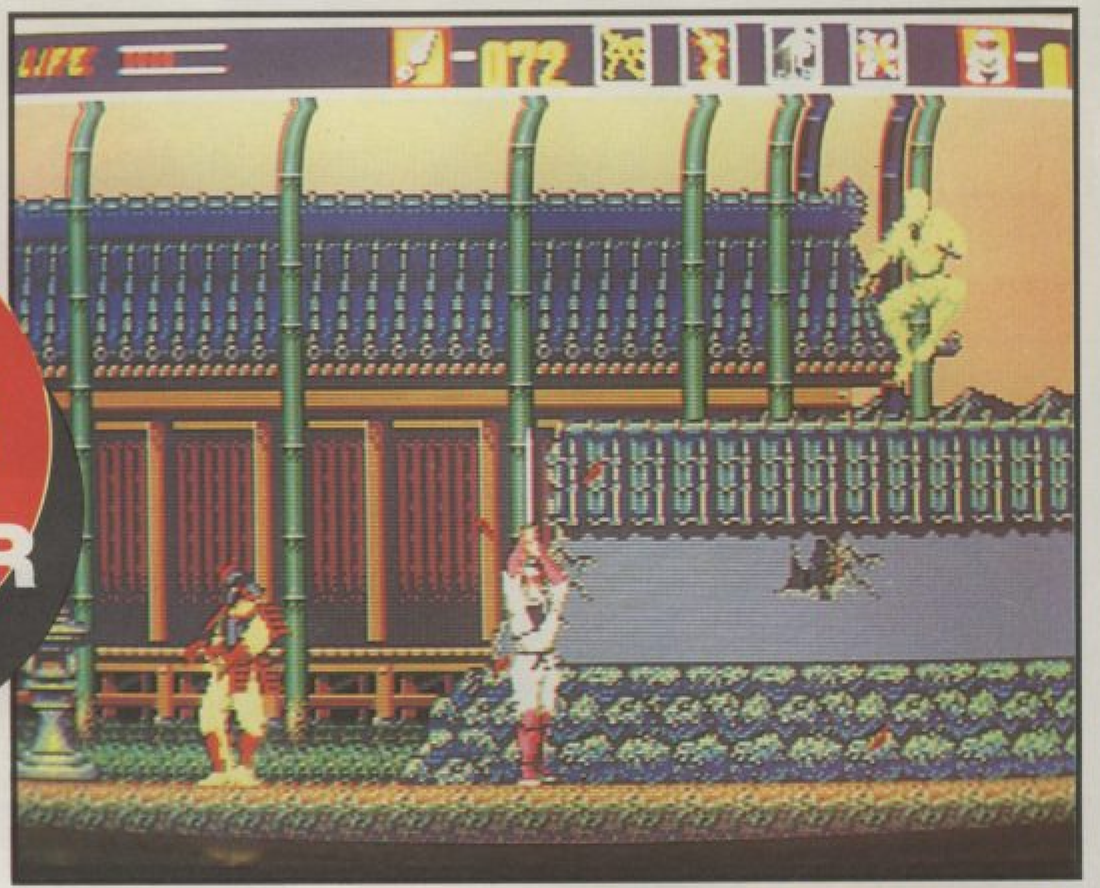
Screenshots may be taken from a different version.

Hey, Hey, Hey, it's...

THE SUPER SHI



TGM STAR PLAYER



The Zeed corporation once upon a time was the most feared crime syndicate in the world, but their plans were thwarted by the power of stealth wielded by Shinobi Master, Joe Musashi. They vowed to return. Now, three years later, the Neo Zeed has appeared, more powerful than ever before and out for vengeance. All who hold the power of stealth must die.

Not content with first killing Joe's right-hand man they have also kidnapped his trusty companion's wife. So it's time to get on your fighting feet and jump into action, wipe out the Neo Zeed and rescue the widow Naoko.

Joe starts off with a useful array of weapons, from a limited amount of poxy shuriken to a razor sharp sword — as well as those his martial arts skill is world-renowned. Extra weapons (like fireballs), lives and power-ups can be found in crates. Along with these you can call on four ninja spells: Ikazuchi, Kariu, Fushin and Mijin (see box). And if all else fails you can always somersault to the top of the screen and spray the enemy with concealed daggers.

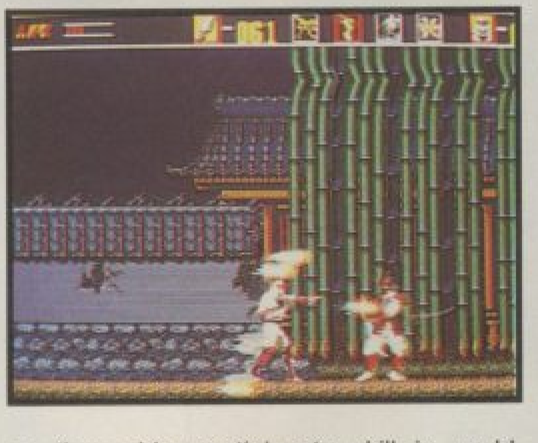
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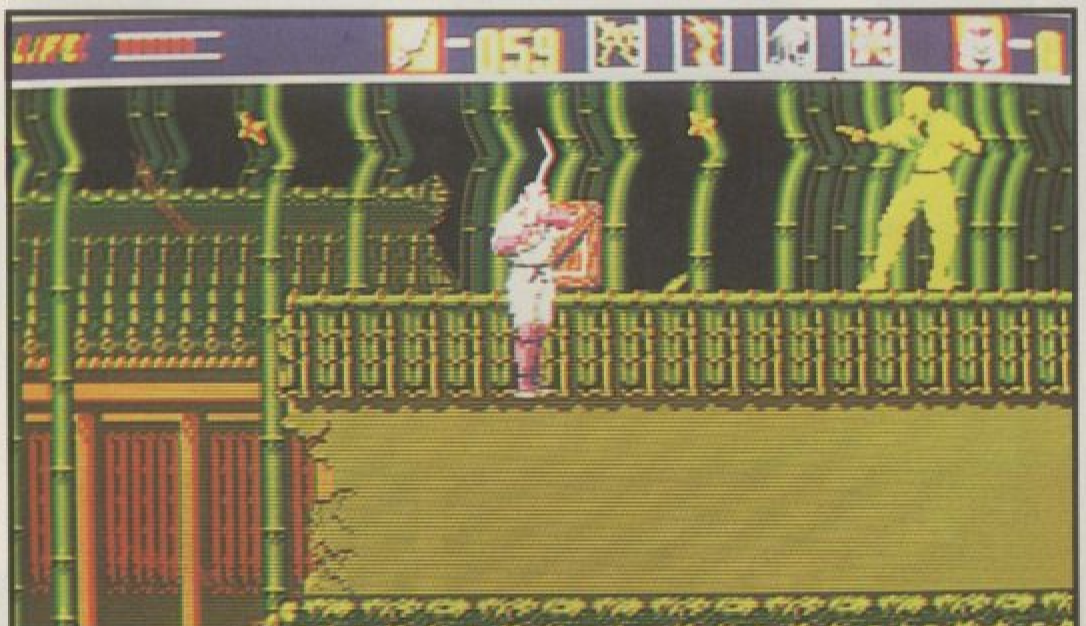
■ The title screen from Sega's latest Mega beat-'em-up.

■ Mind your backs, folks, Joe Musashi gets ready for more mayhem as he lets rip with some ninja magic.

■ Still stuck on the first level? Never mind, get chucking those fireballs.

■ Only 59 throwing daggers left? Better get using that ninja magic again, but be prudent, you've only four of those left!

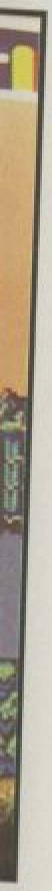




As Joe battles his way through the nine levels that make up The Super Shinobi he meets many foes. Most notably, the Samurai warriors resplendent in their armour, nuns who appear to be quite harmless until they cast off their habits, and even Batman and Spider-Man later on.

As if superheroes weren't enough, there are many obstacles along the way. Traps and pitfalls include bamboo spikes to skewer you, lasers trying their best to fry you and booby-trapped crates. Any hit will reduce your energy bar, and even with nine lives the game will take hours to master.

Needless to say, the end of each level contains a ginormous gang leader. Shrewd





HNOBI

SEGA

GAME **THE SUPER SHINOBI**
PRODUCER **SEGA**
VERSIONS
MEGA DRIVE £29.99

MEGA DRIVE 88%

***Golden Axe* was impressive and *The Super Shinobi* is just as good. It's a long time since I've seen this sort of attention to detail in a game. The sprites have to be seen to be believed, especially some of the level guardians. Sound is just as impressive, with a dozen or so soundtracks that must push the Mega Drive's sound chip to the limit. And don't say, 'Oh yeah, this is just another oriental beat-'em-up', I assure you *The Super Shinobi* is worth every penny of the asking price.**

players will do well to save up their ninja powers for this confrontation.

Although basically a continuation of the old beat-'em-up genre, *The Super Shinobi* is a totally polished game. Pre-game features include a Sound Test (flick through and hear the in-game tunes), difficulty levels, the number of throwing stars available (size of pockets?) and the configuration of the buttons for ninja magic, fight and jump. What more could you ask for?

Mark Caswel

POWER TO THE NINJA

Joe Musashi holds four mystical ninja powers.

JITSU OF IKAZUCHI — surrounds our hero with a mystical energy force for a short time. Acts as a sort of shield.

JITSU OF KARIU — choosing this option causes five pillars of fire to erupt from the ground. Particularly good for weakening guardians.

JITSU OF FUSHIN — some levels require you to leap quite ridiculous chasms, but with this mystical power Joe can leap skyscrapers with single bound (well not quite, but you get the idea).

JITSU OF MIJIN — use this option as a last resort as it causes Joe to commit ritual suicide (ie, he explodes taking all enemy troops with him). Spectacular but it costs you a life.

Reach for the skies

BLUE ANGELS

ACCOLADE

Ever watched the Red Arrows? Wished you were such a skilled pilot, flying in tight formation and trailing blue smoke? Adored by the public, held agog by your feats of daring-do? Well tough. You can't be a Red Arrow with this program. Not at all. Instead, you're a Blue Angel, one of the six pilots in the USA's equivalent formation flying team.

Being an fully-fledged Angel requires much experience and practice so you've a long way to go before you can put on your own airshow. The first step is to visit a display and see a team in action. You can watch a high, low or flat airshow (they each use different sequences of manoeuvres) from the stands, a balloon or a chase plane. Like any of the games sections, the amount of scenery and plane detail can be altered to change appearance and speed. Speed can be directly changed to run the program at half or quarter speed.

Your appetite duly whetted, head for a simulator. A wireframe cube, which may be rotated in any direction, maps out manoeuvres with striped lines to give an idea of what moves, such as dirty roll and fortus, actually look like. Graphics are wireframe 3-D when simulated, with floating squares marking the correct flight path, and autopilot showing how it's done. Displays tell you what to do next and how far you are from ideal position. On completion you are told the amount of error, your path and the correct flight path, and are given the option of trying again.

When your willing to risk life and limb — and a few million dollars of aircraft — it's time to practise a manoeuvre in reality. This is the same as the simulator except with a proper landscape and no giant floating hoops. With all the moves sussed you can then perform your own airshow.

GAME **BLUE ANGELS**
PRODUCER **ACCOLADE**
VERSIONS
PC £24.99
C64 £14.99

PC 84%

Though certainly not packed with polygons, scenery and plane are well represented. On a standard (ie slow!) PC movement is jerky and unrealistic but the game is still playable, particularly on the simulator options. Better PCs show the game off, particulary with the long sweeping views of planes in formation. Bar a rough 'Break!' sample (when you go off course), sound is wimpy.

C64 83%

Due to the speed constraints of the humble C64, the view from the cockpit is a plain and restricted one but, if anything, the cockpit and its displays work better than on the PC. Certain elements have been simplified, again in the interests of speed and this pays off as 8-bit Blue Angels is just as fun to play as it is on the PC. Sound is simple but functional and unobtrusive.



The C64 version of Blue Angels (above) stills retains the playability and challenge of the PC version whilst staying within the constraints of the host computer

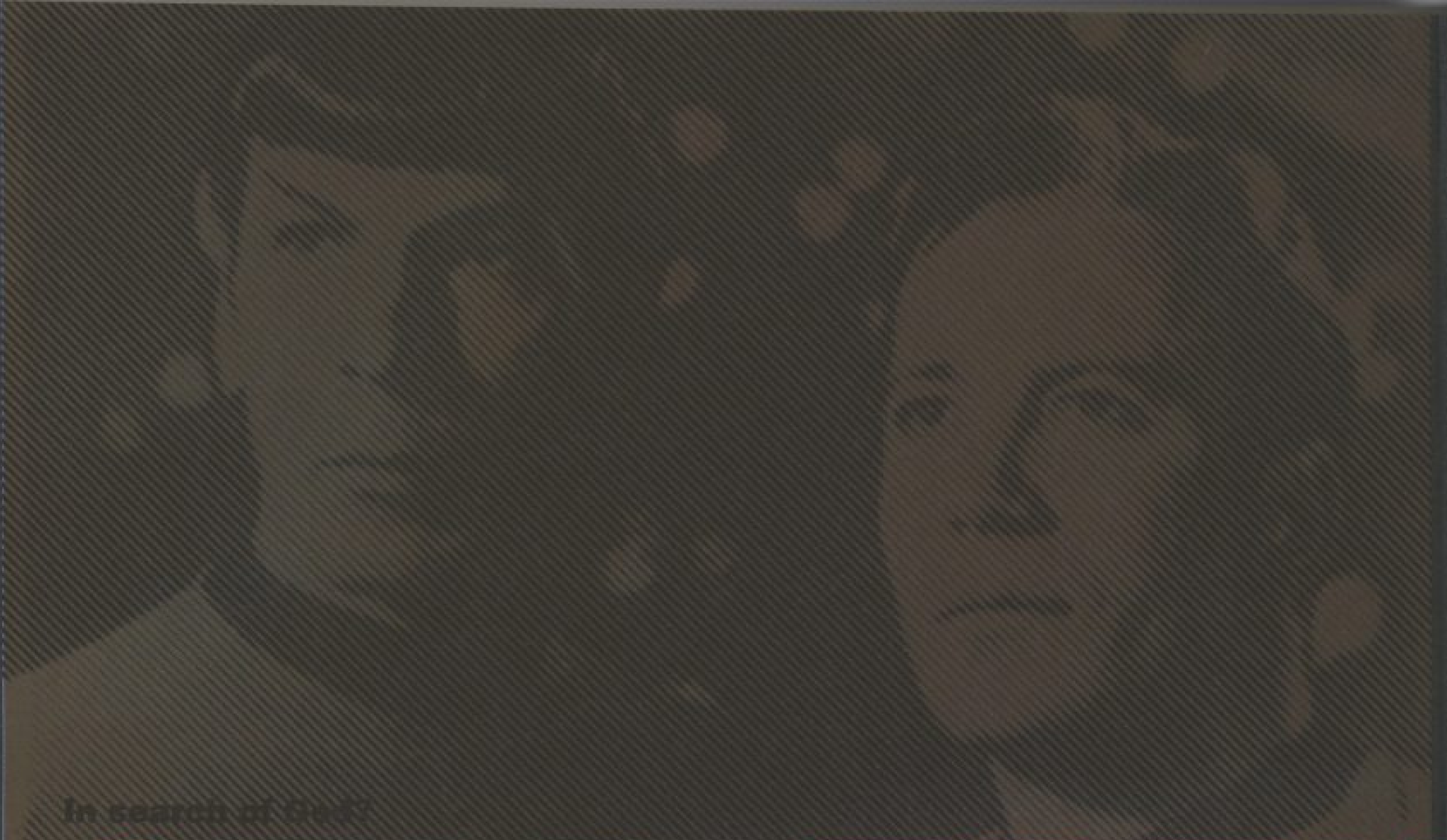
Stunt plane games and simulations aren't common. In fact, the only one we can think of that fits the bill is Chuck Yeager's Flight Trainer (with the possible addition of MicroProse's Acrojet). While that Electronic Arts release used landscape features such as bridges as part of its stunts, Blue Angels has a much wider range of manoeuvres to be learnt and more thoughtful, user-friendly practice facilities.

As for formation flying, that's completely new to computer and extends the challenge and lastability of gameplay.

Performing a move accurately is tough enough but doing it in correct relation to five other planes requires real experience.

Being just the pilot of only one plane in a group of six adds variety to it all: learn one manoeuvre and use it in one position then you've still got five other flight positions to learn for the very same move.

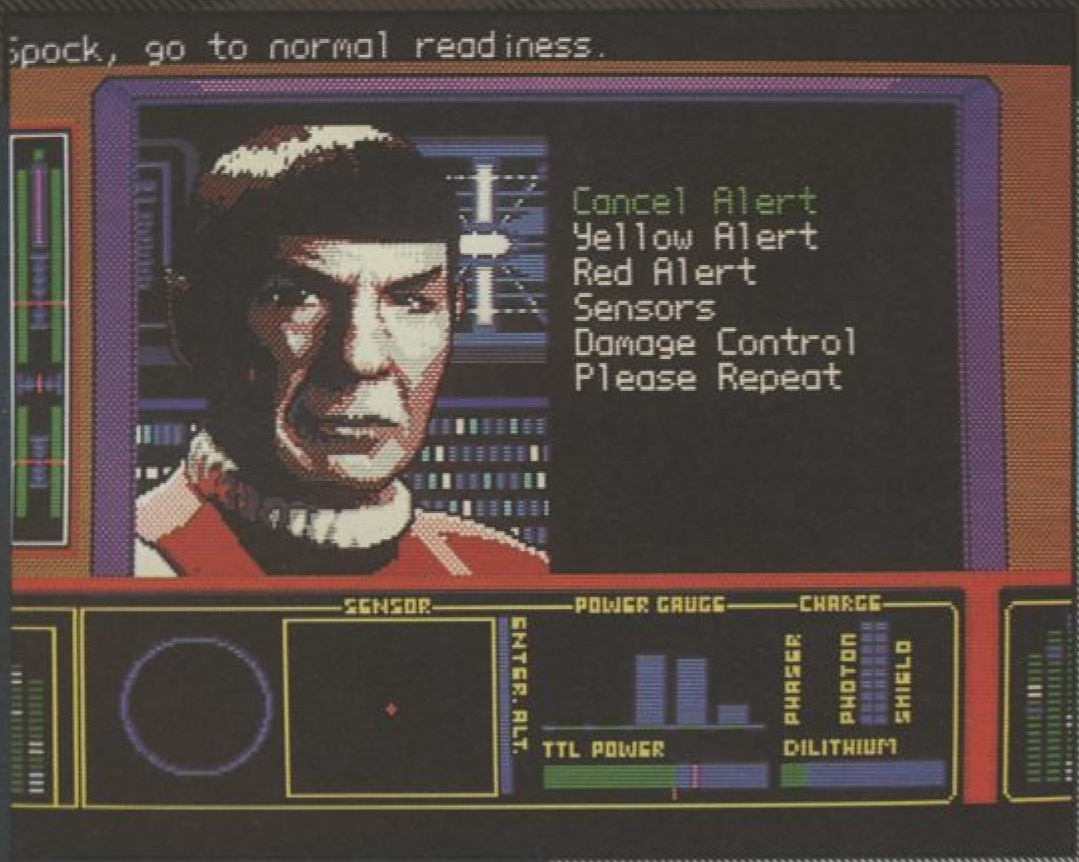
For a flight sim without the endless violence of Russian bombing and dogfights against MiGs, Blue Angels is a very well thought out and very refreshing release.



In search of God?

STAR TREK V THE FINAL FRONTIER

Mindscape



After going back in time to bring a whale to the future in *Star Trek IV*, the crew of the Enterprise were brought to trial for contravention of Federation law (one being the destruction of the original Enterprise). But after a generous court martial Kirk's rank was reduced to Captain and he received what he had wanted for years, a command post on the new Enterprise. An uneasy peace treaty stands between the Federation and Klingons, but the leniency of Kirk's trial angers them immensely and the relationship is in danger of crumbling.

As James Tiberius Kirk at the head of his ship, you must respond to a priority seven distress call received from the small outpost of Nimbus III, where terrorists, it is believed, have taken the Romulan, Federation and Klingon consuls hostage. But upon arrival you discover that a renegade Vulcan called Sybok has used his mystical powers to turn the consuls to his cause, the search for the planet of Eden, Sha Ka Ree.

It is at this point that you start your foray, on the Enterprise under the control of Sybok, on its way to the centre of the Universe. Unfortunately for you the Klingons have been monitoring your communications and are on your tail. Partly to investigate the situation, partly to kill or capture Kirk and partly to annihilate the terrorists for the kidnap of their consul. At the helm of the Klingon ship is Commander Klaa, a man with a deep-

THAT'S ILLOGICAL



Star Trek isn't as big in the UK as its country of origin, the States, but you won't go far without bumping into a crowd of Trekkies. It started with Gene Roddenberry's Sixties TV series. And, after many repeats, was followed in 1979 by *Star Trek — The Motion Picture* (the first of five). Roddenberry's first story was *The Cage*, later to be turned into a rare, two-part *Star Trek* story called *The Menagerie*.

The series ran 1966-1969, with 79 episodes in all, and many of them on a very tight budget. Money was always a big problem for sci-fi programmes — especially *Star Trek*. Big scenery shots always proved difficult. The bridge of the Enterprise was always available and for location shots they could always visit somewhere like a disused quarry. But sometimes the script called for huge cities or interstellar scenes, so matte paintings were created to scale and used as backdrops.

And who could forget the immortal catchphrases that were created aboard the Enterprise. 'He's dead, Jim.' 'It's illogical, Captain.' 'She'll nooo tek it Cap'n'. And a personal favourite 'Live long and prosper'.

Star Trek fever lives on with a sixth film planned, and a continues in the spirit of numerous Trekkie conventions.

GAME	**STAR TREK V**
PRODUCER	**MINDSCAPE**
VERSIONS	
ATARI ST	£24.99
AMIGA	£24.99
PC	£24.99

PC **85%**

Trekkies have it all here. Great game and great graphics (even digitised pictures of all the crew). Although *Star Trek V* tries to be one of the many games spanning both strategy and action, I felt the latter was very much in absence. And though Kirk isn't supposed to annoy the Klingons, when I did reach them I took great delight in locking on the photon torpedoes and blasting away. On shooting, though, sound was a bit feeble: although there are some interesting effects inside the ship. If you've always wanted to be at the helm of the Enterprise, you couldn't really fault Mindscape's attempt. And, let's face it, it's solar systems better then the film.

rooted hatred for the Federation and, in particular, Kirk.

Back on the bridge of the Enterprise, you are sitting in the captain's chair — feels good to be back — surveying the view screen. Around the display are various gauges that tell you the state of your ship: current and maximum engine power, velocity and ascent/descent meters. Below them the navigational heading, the sensory read out and total power gauge ('don't push em, Cap'n'). Also, essential for warp speed, is the dilithium crystal level and, finally, the power gauge.

The final gauge indicates phaser power, shield power, engine power, life support power and average power usage. All of the gauges need constant attention — especially in battle.

At the deck you can contact Spock, Dr McCoy, Sulu, Chekov, Uhura and Scotty. Each character appears along with a list of appropriate actions (ie Scotty for the engines, Uhura for communications).

To get anywhere warp speed is needed, but at the start of the game your ship is very low on power. It is thought that dilithium crystals can be found in 'wormholes'. These holes can be found throughout the galaxy. Carefully enter one, pick up some crystals and get outta there — simple.

And that is your mission, Jim. Reach Eden before the Klingons do. What will be there? Will you find the Supreme Being? Get going, there's no time to waste.

Mark Caswell



TOWER OF BABEL

RAINBIRD

After the Great Flood (y'know — Noah, the ark, two-by-two and the dove — that sort of thing), the Earth people gathered in Shinar, at the south of the Tigris/Euphrates valley in Babylonia. There they built a huge tower, the Tower Of Babel (surprise surprise), reaching high up into the clouds. However, they would have preferred it to reach the heavens: it was constructed so that mortals could climb to its summit and there communicate with God.

Needless to say, they didn't have much luck in having a chin-wag with the Big G (after all, he is an *extremely* busy deity), but they did attract some aliens, just passing on the way back from shopping. The aliens were the very rare and special kind — nice ones. They beamed down three spider-like robots to educate the humans and help them with the tower.

Although most humans fled from the spiders, those who stayed benefitted from their knowledge, and men and machines reached perfect harmony. But it was a doomed relationship. The spider robots became homesick and tried to return to their world by summoning a spacecraft from the top of the Tower. This angered the humans and, using the technology taught to them by the spiders, filled the Towers' levels with traps and various robots to prevent them from leaving.

This is where you enter the scene. The spiders must quickly make their way to the top of the Tower or else their alien creators will return to Earth, and this time they'll be in a *very* bad mood.

The Tower is divided into many sub-towers, of between one and four floors and arranged in groups of nine. The first three towers are instantly accessible and then, when a tower is completed, any tower adjacent to it may be attempted. When at least seven of the nine towers in completed the next group of nine can be attempted.

Each tower is displayed in filled 3-D and can be viewed from one of many angles: the eyes of a spider, from near a spider (exact position adjustable) and from one of four cameras, which can be panned and zoomed in on a section of the tower. You have three types of spider robot under your control — Zapper, Pusher and Grabber — but on some towers they aren't all available. Each tower has a task of collecting a number of Klondikes (the spiders' power source) and/or shooting a number of enemy robots, but this is complicated by various tower features and the enemy robots themselves (see boxes).

Logically, as the spiders are robots, you can program them. Each spider can have its own program of eight moves and all three can be run at once, or just one, leaving you to manually guide another spider.

If the built-in towers aren't enough, there's a construction option. A plan view is used to plot out the different robots and features, and a password system prevents it from being re-loaded into the kit and tampered with by inquisitive friends (or meddling enemies).

Pete Cooke has been around the computer industry for some years now, best known for 3-D arcade adventure *Tau Ceti*, and has chosen to make his programming re-appearance in fine fashion. Filled vectors are no surprise from Pete and, as ever, are spot on for portraying high-tech constructions and devices.

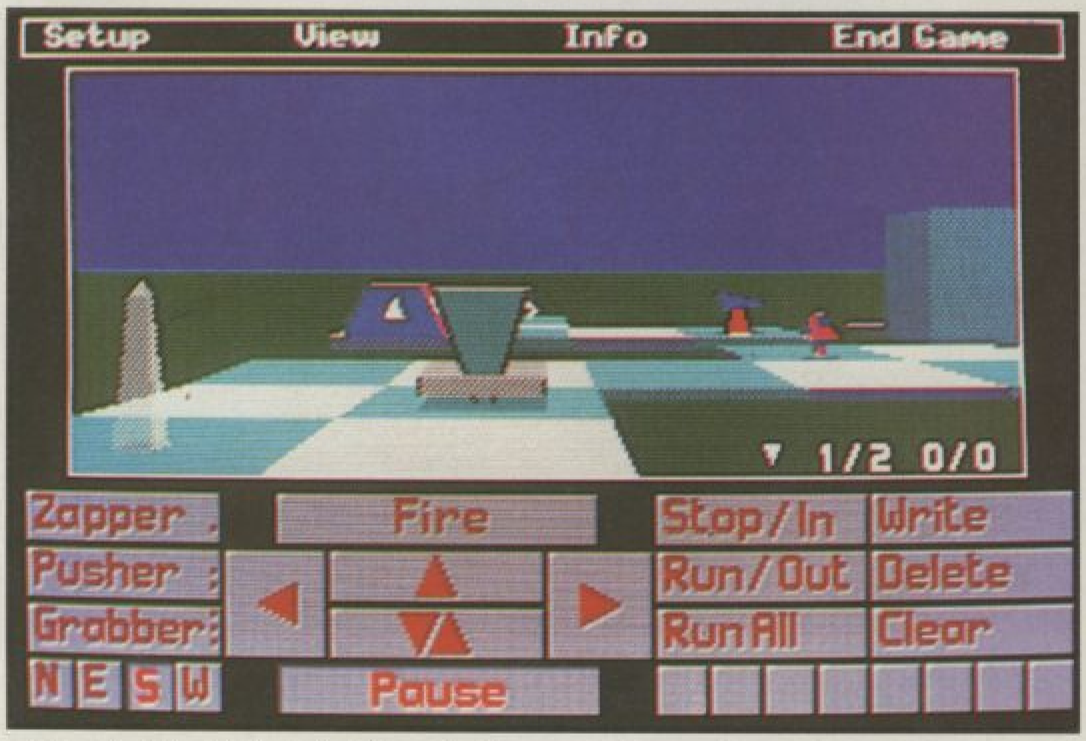
The puzzles are not to be sneezed at. They're pretty straightforward at first but soon become challenging, and then evermore difficult. The towers may all be made up from the same simple elements and have direct aims but their combinations make for much headscratching, using the many viewpoints to survey the scene in an



■ Pete Cooke enters the 16-bit foray with an obscurely plotted and surreally designed mini-masterpiec e with arachnid overtones. Here the robotic trio must collect two Klondikes, a task led by the Grabber

(often vain) attempt to work out the sequence of events. When sequences of moves have to be programmed it pays to be very careful — you have to work out the consequences of each move without actually seeing it — and when two (or more) spiders have to be used at once you need great concentration, and two pairs of eyes!

If the built-in towers prove too much or you want to torture your friends, the construction kit proves itself as a very useful, easy-to-use utility, and the password system is a very good idea. Obviously, it can also be used extend the number of towers but this may not be required; *Tower Of Babel* becomes tiresome after playing too many levels and once you've solved a



■ Once again it's the friendly Grabber that must lead the way, using its attracting tractor beam to gather the essential power-giving Klondikes. One collected and one to go, the next sub-tower is in sight

SERIOUS OBJECTIONS

Proximity mine Explodes if anything moves onto an adjacent square to it — highly dangerous.
Time bomb Explodes after a delay preset by the player and is as destructive as a mine.
Block Obstructive and indestructible but Pushable — very useful for defence against enemy Zappers.
Glass block Pushable and directly reflects a laser beam — also good for taking out bad Zappers.
Prism Deflects a laser beam through 90 degrees, pushable.
Flag Just gets in the way — Zap it if you're trigger-happy.
Convertor Firing into it changes a laser beam into a repelling tractor beam, or vice versa.
Force up If fired on by Grabber, causes all unoccupied lifts to go up.
Force down Similarly, causes lifts to go down.
Freezer If fired on by Grabber, freezes everything except the spiders.
Wiper Also activated by Grabber, it removes all unoccupied squares from the four main compass directions — jeez!
Exchanger If Grabber fires at it, they exchange places and the Exchanger explodes.

GAME **TOWER OF BABEL**
PRODUCER **RAINBIRD**
VERSIONS

AMIGA	£24.99
ATARI ST	£24.99

ATARI ST **81%**

A clean, high-tech control fascia surrounds the action screen (although the alternative control panel looks grotty), which, while using too many bright colours, shows effective futuristic landscapes from whichever viewing angle you choose. To make the landscape more interesting you can even choose to have lightning, moving planets and comets in the night sky. 3-D movement is smooth, if not particularly fast, and the spiders move in an amusing and realistic manner. Sound effects are ordinary but functional.

TOWER ENEMIES

Zapper This is the hostile form of Zapper, a deadly laser cannon which can either fire in a fixed direction or while rotating, depending on the type.
Pusher Another nasty namesake, it repels anything in its path and can be fixed or rotating.
Worm Just gets in the way. Cannot be Zapped but is Pushable.
Watcher A very calm robot. It simply observes the Tower and can't be destroyed or moved.
Hopper Bounces around like a mad thing and irritates — perfect for Zapping.
Land Lizard UnZappable, UnPushable, and eats the floor if an object in its path forces it to change direction.

THE SPIDERS FROM MARS

ZAPPER Most dynamic, this spider has a built-in laser cannon which can destroy most enemies and objects. It can also take out the other two spiders, so be careful out there.
PUSHER Most unsociable of the team, it's empowered with a tractor beam which pushes away anything movable it approaches.
GRABBER Friendliest of the threesome, it has a tractor used to collect Klondikes and to activate tower devices such as Force Ups and Downs, Freezers, Wipers and Exchangers.

tower it's challenge disappears.

Tower Of Babel is a well-designed, original and playable puzzle game but, like many puzzle games, won't appeal to all. Think carefully before buying but make sure you *do* consider buying it.

Warren Lapworth

And! There! He goes!

INDIANAPOLIS 500

The famous Indy 500 race is now fully recreated on computer for your enjoyment, 200 laps of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway track in the way of you becoming champion.

The basic car you drive must conform with the Indy 500 standards but within these you can choose your pit/engine team from March/Cosworth, Lola/Buick and Penske/Chevrolet.

There are eight different types of adjustment that may be made to alter the performance of your chosen car. The front and rear wings of the vehicle affect the drag and downward force exerted on it. The composition of tyres has an effect on the speed and handling of the car so you have a choice of soft, medium or hard ones, and, as there're only left turns on the track, the difference in size of the left and right tyres is important. Acceleration depends upon gear ratios and turbochargers, and anti-roll bars change handling and responsiveness.

You can practise before taking a qualifying lap then a proper race, of ten, 30, 60 or the full 200 laps. Entering the pits lets you change worn tires, refuel or adjust the cars performance, but wastes valuable time. Crashes are inevitable and they're a good time to use the replay option, which shows the last 20 seconds of racing from one of six viewpoints.

Indianapolis 500 really shows you how first-person racing games should be done. We thought we seen it all with Revs and Test Drive II but Indy combines a fully adjustable vehicle with fast, realistic and involving action.

It's a tough race all the way: keeping the car facing the right way is tricky enough! Skids are woefully easy to fall into, particularly after an often unavoidable trip across the grass, and the right-hand side of your car often gets all the paint scraped off it from hugging the outer edge of the track a little too closely! Indeed, staying squarely in the middle of the track is something you won't be able to do without a lot of practice — unless you're travelling at less than 40 mph!

In short, if you want challenging arcade-like racing and aren't fussed about tracks (only having the Indianapolis is Indy 500's only real fault), go for the Electronic Art's chequered flag!

Warren Lapworth

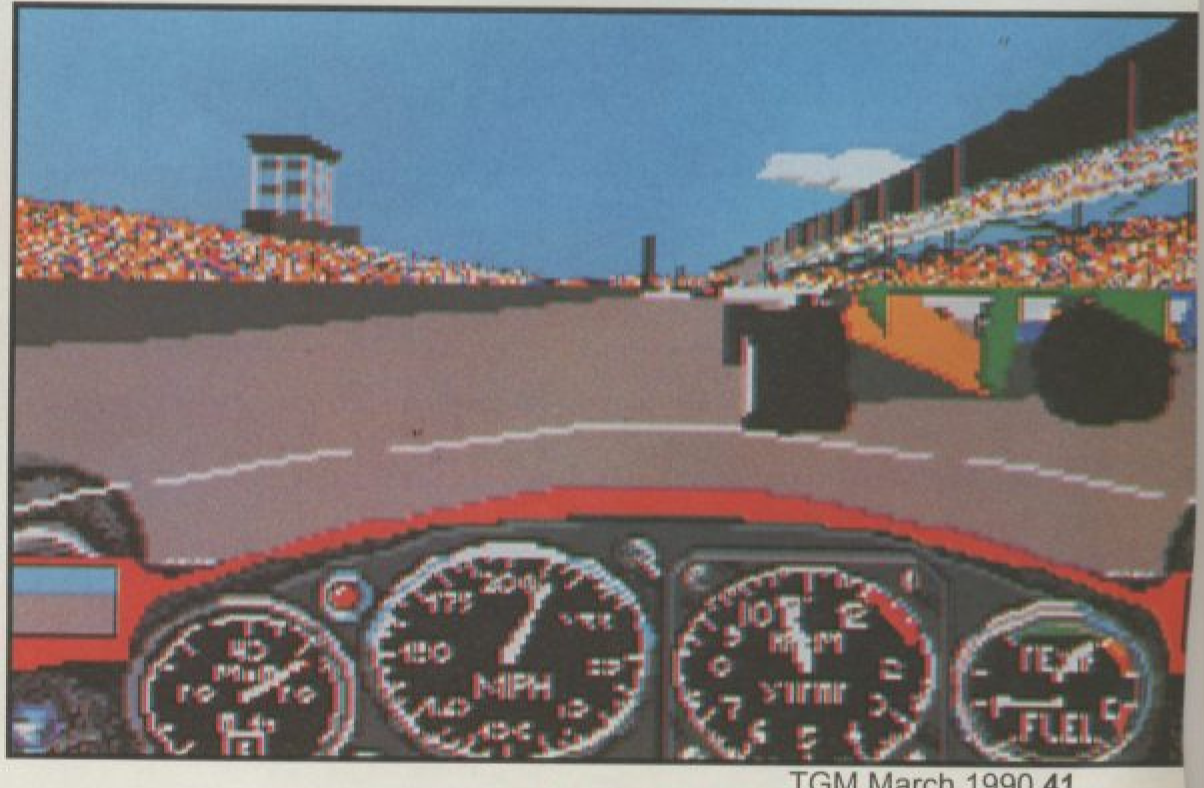
GAME **TOWER OF BABEL**
PRODUCER **RAINBIRD**
VERSIONS

AMIGA	£24.99
ATARI ST	£24.99

PC **83%**

PC Indianapolis 500 is fast! Even on a standard, slow PC the track, cars and trackside features pass by (spin by...) at considerable speed and reasonable smoothness. It's not as if detail has been scrimped, either. The grandstand is fully detailed and cars are composed of many polygons — they really do look like proper Formula One racing cars. Crashes are little short of spectacular and the different replay viewpoints show very effective, realistic race scenes. Sound is remarkably like that of an ordinary Spectrum but Adlib and Roland sound boards are supported.

■ Murray Walker said there would be days like this. The 3-D effect in Indy 500 is both fast and realistic – even on a slow PC – but you're at first you're likely to see the stands spinning by rather than the victor's chequered flag



DAMOCLES MERCENARY 2

NOVAGEN

A long time, it's been, in fact just over four years, since the revolutionary *Mercenary* touched down on the C64. After finally escaping from Targ you've arrived at your original destination, Eris, the fifth planet in the Gamma solar system.

Eris is the jewel of the system but within a few hours this jewel is going to be severely tarnished. The rogue comet Damocles is headed directly for the planet which, as it happens, you're to land on. Maybe it would have been wiser to stay on Targ...

As your ship glides downwards to the Eris spaceport you admire the planet's beauty — the vast oceans, the numerous cities and bases clinging to expanses of land emerging from the watery depths. Still, the solar system has eight other planets and 19 moons. A quick sandwich at the spaceport and you can be off to somewhere safer. Unfortunately, while you begin searching for loose change, your ship is falling apart — this is its last flight and you're stranded!

Your personal computer, Benson, promptly orders you to go to the State Office in an antique car — a Chevy '99. Your destination, like most of the buildings around the city, has quite a few floors, packed with rooms. You find the briefing room in the basement, and it's here you're asked to save Eris...

You may want to explore the first city but the real challenge lies in getting a spaceship and taking off. There are many other cities to find. If you stay around long enough you'll see the beautiful sight of sunrise from Dyon, Acheron, Icarus, or any of the other worlds.

As befits a mercenary your primary concern is for financial gain, with the sideline of saving Eris to give you something to do between sales. In an emergency, poor capitalists can go to the Lawson Bank (!) for a loan.

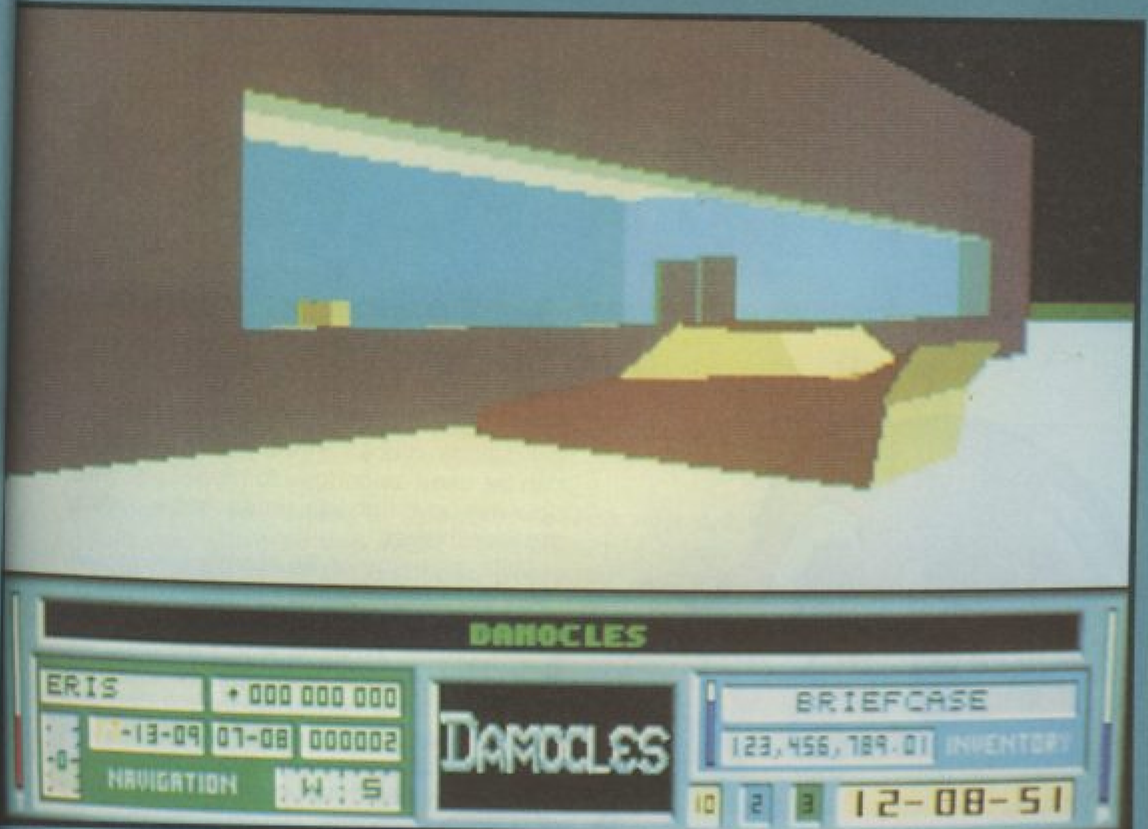
To earn money you must trade objects — there are over a hundred — which can mean a lot of delivery runs in a big variety of ground and air vehicles; although there are other ways of getting from A to B — enough said. To help you out, you may load old *Mercenary* saved games, not that a Mechanoid leader is of that much use this





Nothing compares with the sense of satisfaction once you lift off from Eris and come to terms with the fact that there's 27 other worlds to investigate!





When you first land on Eris, Benson tells you to go to the State Office (left) to receive your mission. Above: feeling restless, you park your antique Chevvy '99 outside a building, and get out to take a look around (note the computer just inside the door).

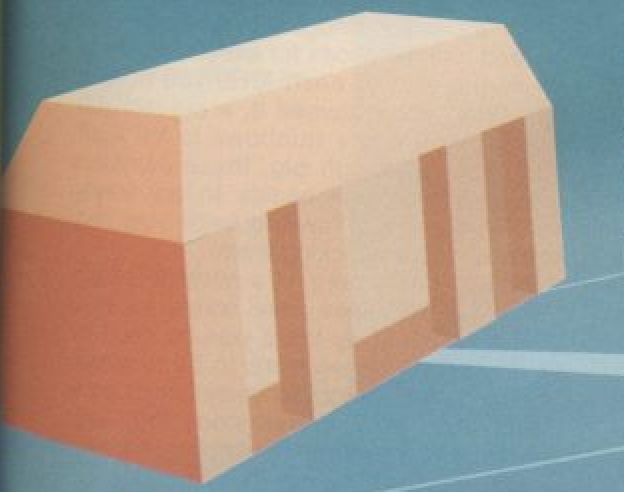
GAME	**DAMOCLES (MERCENARY 2)**
PRODUCER	**NOVAGEN**
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£24.95
ATARI ST	£24.95

time round!

As ever, things most certainly aren't what they seem with buildings holding their secrets deep down or high up in ten-storey office blocks. Was that Sphinx monument you just passed really just for show? How do you get to other planets? Where's the filofax? What about all those locked doors you passed an hour ago? And what use is the computer in the office block?

Most importantly of all, how on Eris do you destroy Damocles? To add insult to injury, what's Benson got so much to be cheerful about anyway? We'll leave you to answer these questions and unravel the game. Don't take too long though; Damocles draws ever nearer...

Robin Hogg



ATARI ST 95%

The feeling of anticipation and desperation when first faced with the enormity of the task is wonderful. So, too, is the sensation of curiosity and wonderment as you explore the first city. Exploring buildings, gazing in awe at the superbly detailed structures all around, puzzling over the use of strange new objects, and generally living a new life is all just so enchanting you quickly become immersed in the world and its ways.

Once you get your first deal and its subsequent reward the feeling is tremendous, but this is nothing compared with the sense of satisfaction once you lift off from Eris, and anticipation when you suddenly have to come to terms with the fact that there's 27 other worlds to investigate! The graphics are brilliant in what they aim to achieve, the detailed polygon graphics creating a rich atmosphere with a surreal, high-tech, lonely and ominously silent feel to it all. Sound effects are well done and perform their task admirably. Welcome back *Mercenary*, you've been away for far too long.

DAMOCLES COMES IN THE WOAKE OF...

The challenging and often innovative computer game world of filled 3-D is one Paul Woakes has specialised in for a long time. His first commercial creation was *Encounter*, the hit that launched Novagen as a force to be reckoned with. For the Commodore 64 and Atari 8-bit, it was based on the arcade classic *Battle Zone*, but the coin-op's green vectors were replaced with colourful filled shapes. The movement was commendably fast for such machines and the blasting action irresistible; *Encounter* has now been rereleased on budget.

Then, in the spring of 1986, the big one arrived. Pre-release hype was minimal by today's standards, yet *Mercenary* was heralded as one of the best combinations of action, adventure and strategy of all time. In the game, you crash-land on the planet Targ with only a computer, Benson, for company. You have to find a Nova-drive spaceship to escape but to do this alliances must be formed with the races warring on Targ — the Palyars and the Mechanoids. Objects are found and a city, underground buildings and spacecraft explored as part of the game, which can be completed in three different ways. For ailing mercenaries, the Targ Survival Kit was released, a collection of maps and information that formed a complete guide to Targ.

Again for the Atari and Commodore 8-bits, graphics were line vectors rather than filled but game features had much more detail and flight meant that they were viewable from many angles. Again speed was excellent.

About six months later, *Mercenary* was followed by an expansion disk, *The Second City*. This was loaded into the original *Mercenary* and created another city on the opposite side of Targ — the ground covered in red dust rather than lush grass. The aim was the same but this time escape is complicated by the city's prison governor. In *Mercenary*, his possessions and life were ruined by your actions — he's out for vengeance!

After some delay, *Mercenary* was released for 16-bits. Although technically less impressive, gameplay was just as compulsive. Woakes's first original 16-bit creation, however, was *Backlash*, which played similarly to *Encounter*. Graphics were more detailed and 3-D more effective but basically it was the same mindless but addictive action.

Then Paul began work on *Mercenary II — Damocles*. It's been previewed and demoed many times in its long programming history, but at long, long last, Benson is back!

But not a sight of Bungle, Zippy and George in...

RAINBOW IS

There are few villains as nasty as the repulsive and grossly overweight Baron Von Blubba. In times past, he turned two young friends, Bub and Bob into little, bubble-blowing dinosaurs and kidnapped their girlfriends. But the friends searched for them and eventually, after 'bubbling' many of Blubba's henchcreatures, they found the girls and returned to human form.

Bub, Bob and their companions then chose to leave the hustle, bustle and ugly little creatures of society behind and begin life anew — on the Rainbow Islands. It was a very happy place, full of sun, fun, nice people to meet and exciting things to do. Sounds like a Butlin's Holiday World commercial, doesn't it? (Except, in this case, the cheap hype is true.)

But the idyllic islands didn't stay that green and pleasant for long. A certain crude, fat and unpleasant person came to the islands. Bernard Manning. Er, make that Baron Von Blubba; bigger, slimier and more corrupt than ever before — if that's possible. Aided and abetted by gaggles of assorted minions, Blubba captured all the innocent fun-loving people he could find and began laying the islands to waste.



Only two people are capable of saving the people and restoring order and jollity to the Rainbow Islands. Happily, it's the same duo who evaded capture and who've defeated Blubba before: Bub and Bob. You and a friend take control of the happy friends (just Bub in a one-player game), running and jumping through each island level. Progress up each vertically-scrolling level is helped by your magical and psychedelic ability to form temporary solid rainbows in the air. The rainbows can be used as bridges to proper platforms, opening up otherwise unreachable parts of the island level.

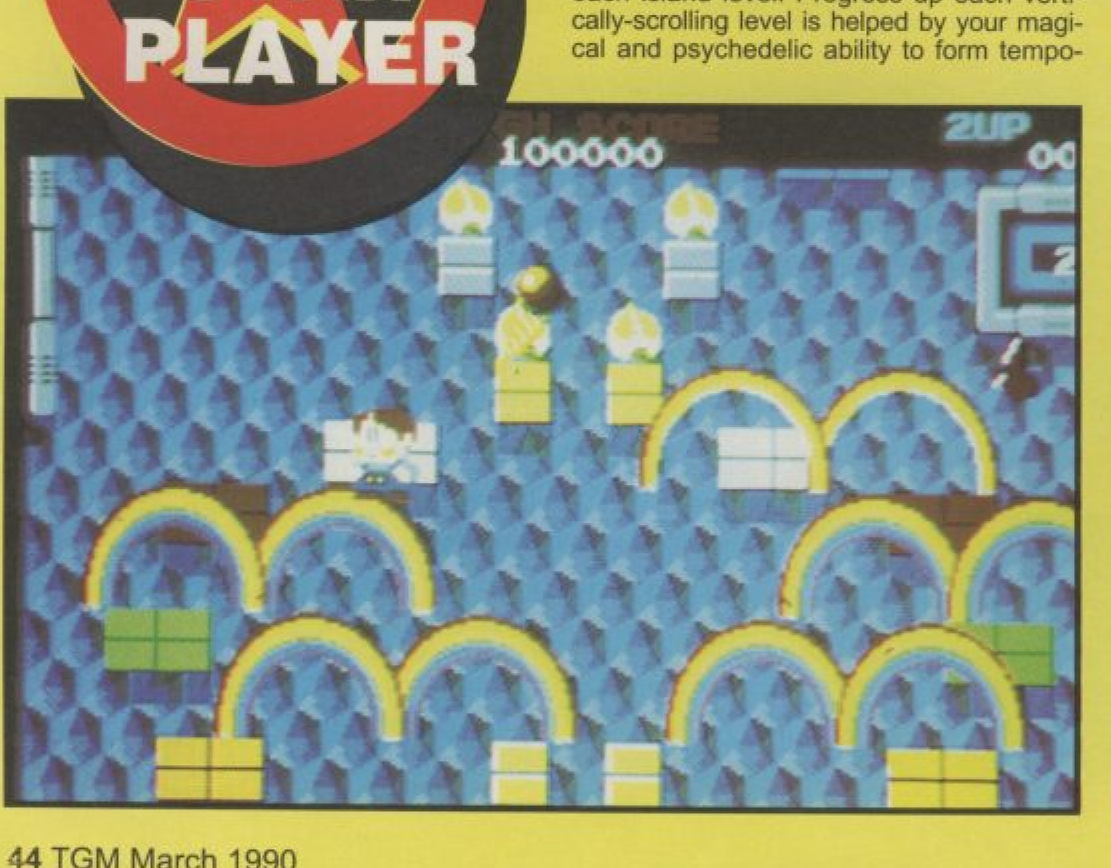
With so many of Blubba's minions wandering the islands and out for fresh human blood, you can't keep running and dodging forever. Which is where the rainbows' second use comes into play. If a monster is hit with a rainbow, he's killed and leaves an object behind. If he's hit with the top of the rainbow's arc a piece of fruit is left, to be collected for bonus points. Hitting a bad guy with the underside of a forming rainbow leaves a star; a massive bonus is awarded if all colours of stars are collected.

Every third monster killed drops a random special item. Amongst them are extra lives, double and triple rainbows for increased bridging and killing power, and running shoes for extra speed.

At the end of each level you have to face, yes, you guessed it, a big monster, which takes many rainbows to kill it off. Mind you, although big, these monsters aren't the usual ugly beasts. In fact, they're so cute you might have to battle your conscience before attacking them!

Well it's finally here, in a releasable form. The legal difficulties were sorted out (see box) and thankfully there was no need for any computer conversions to be rewritten; Ocean have Graftgold's finely-honed code intact. And what conversions they are! Firebird's conversions of Rainbow Islands' prequel, Bubble Bobble (see box), were authentic to the arcade original and now the Bub and Bob story is continued in equally

TGM STAR PLAYER



BUB, BOB, BUBBLES AND BLUBBA

Before they hopped around rainbows, Bub and Bob were petite dinosaurs in Taito's Bubble Bobble.

In Bubble Bobble Bub and Bob could trap monsters in the bubbles they blew and pop them with their horny noses, to leave behind fruit, bonus letters, umbrellas, special bubbles, sweets or crucifixes.

Bubble Bobble is a scream in two player mode; both you and a partner can rampage through 100 levels.

Firebird's accurate conversions, coded by Software Creations, were very well received (see TGM001!!) and are now available on compilation and budget — check it out.

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ISLANDS

Ocean

Game **Rainbow Islands**	
Producer **Ocean**	
VERSIONS	
Amiga	£24.99
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RAINBOW WRANGLES

The conversion rights to this Taito coin-op were originally bought by Telecom Soft but they themselves were subsequently bought by MicroProse. Graftgold converted it for them but Taito prevented MicroProse from releasing it, as their contract with Telecom Soft prevented a third-party licensee. Thus Ocean, with their strong Taito licence links, took up the rights and finally bring us Rainbow Islands.

(or more) accurate fashion.

Aside from graphics and sound, both are remarkably close to the coin-op, original gameplay is intact, and that means very high playability, as addictive as that of Bubble Bobble. From immediate impressions, it seems like any other cute Japanese platform game (lord knows there've been enough), but once you've completed the first two relatively simple levels, you're hooked.

From bubbles to rainbows, Bub, Bob and Blubba are the winning team!

Warren Lapworth

■ (Right) Manic romp about fun as Bub hunts through the Rainbow Islands for treasure.
(Below)Use rainbow power to leap up on those oh-so-tricky-to-get-to platforms!
(Left) Okay so far, now knock out the Island's beasts before climbing any further.





AMIGA 93%

You want a coin-op? Go to your local computer store and splash out 25 quid on this! Okay, so maybe it's not that accurate but it's certainly close — unless you're a real fan of the arcade machine you'll be hard pushed to spot the difference. There are some colour and slight definition discrepancies, and everything happens a little slower, but otherwise, graphics are identical. Sound effects aren't as close but are a good approximation and jolly the game along.

C64 92%

You don't even need a 16-bit machine and lots of memory to play a highly accurate coin-op conversion! Graphics are on the blocky side, but are as close as you're gonna get considering the C64's resolution capabilities, and bright use of colour helps disguise any slight ugliness. A faithful rendition of the coin-op's music and lively little effects form a soundtrack that rounds off the game nicely.

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SHORTS

BAD COMPANY
Logotron ■ Amiga ■ £24.99

Originally reviewed: TGM026
The Bad Company are back and on an Amiga near you. Like the ST version this is a colourful, fast moving, 'blast what moves' game. Though £25 is still a bit steep for a game type that appeared out of the Ark. The Amiga version holds no new treasures, bar some slightly improved sound, and as such attention still wanes after an hour or so.
MC
Machine update: 70%

BLACKJACK
Dynamix/MicroAce
■ PC ■ £29.95

Blackjack, aka Pontoon and 21, is one of the simplest card games ever. Certainly one of the most widely recognised and second in triviality only to Snap. Still, it's apparently big enough in the US for a high-profile product.

Not only can you play basic and advanced skill levels of Blackjack, but you can play with several hands of cards at once. Four different specialised strategies are catered for – split, double-down, surrender and draw/stand – and many gaming statistics are provided.

Predictably, not much to look at and even less to listen to. Text is neatly displayed, cards are simple but clear and easily identifiable, and colours are tasteful. Sound effects are rare – but it's no big deal because they're the usual PC grating squeeks so your ears aren't missing much.

The computer program has plenty of options and statistics to hand, and is well presented. But it's only a computerised version of blackjack. And no matter how much it is dressed up, it is still deadly dull. Much more fun's to be had playing blackjack with a few friends and real cards.
WL
Machine rating: 56%

BULLFIGHT BOXING
Creative Amusement
■ PC Engine ■ £29.95

No, don't worry, you don't have to go up against a huge, bloodthirsty beast with just a pair of wimpy gloves and some silky shorts to help you. Instead, you must

BEVERLY HILLS COP
Tynesoft ■ Amiga ■ £24.99

See C64 version for gameplot.
Five quid more for the Amiga version! Why?! It's certainly no better than the ST version. The action kicks off to a good start with a decent rendition of the Harold Faltermeyer theme, but apart from the driving section with its polygon graphics, I feel the machine isn't even trying. Beverly Hills Cop is a game that, unlike the film, at the end of the day doesn't deliver the goods.
MC
Machine rating: 57%

BEVERLY HILLS COP
Tynesoft ■ C64 ■ £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

It's an old film, but still one of Eddie Murphy's best. Axel Foley, who is undoubtedly the most memorable of all Murphy's characters, is on the trail of big-time arms dealer Bruno Bardolino across downtown Beverly Hills. As you may have already guessed, the gameplot bears absolutely no relation to the film storyline whatsoever!

Armed with a Colt .45, you must travel to four locations, pick off Bruno's hoods and arrest the evil baron. But time is short because a bomb planted by Mr Big threatens to send the city sky high.

Graphically and sonically this is the worst version of the lot. The graphics leave a lot to be desired. Small, splodgy, tired looking sprites do their best to entertain – but sadly fail miserably. Fans of the foul-mouthed cop won't be impressed.
MC
Machine rating: 48%

BEVERLY HILLS COP
Tynesoft ■ Atari ST ■ £19.99

See C64 version for gameplot.
Graphically, both 16-bit versions are very similar, with Eddie Murphy looking more like Daley Thompson (or is that Marshal Rosenthal?) than the tough, wise-cracking cop we all know and love. Sound consists of a tinny version of the Harold Faltermeyer theme with simple effects.
MC
Machine rating: 55%



BALLY BALLY LEGEND
Taito ■ PC Engine ■
£24.95

Before we start, let's just get one thing straight. Before you all completely discard this game for being another Jap RPG, as the title suggest, I have to point out that Ball Bally Legend is in fact a motorcycle game – and not a particularly good one at that.

You can choose to race on any of 16 famous tracks or take part in the World Grand Prix. If the latter is selected you can choose between three types of tyres, transmission, suspension, engines and brakes and whether the gears (there are six) will be shifted manually or automatically.

The usual behind the vehicle viewpoint is used but although the road's perspective is plotted well, there's no illusion of movement. Trackside stripes whizz by too quickly (so blurred that they may as well be just one colour), likewise the stripy road, and the plain horizon, with badly-shaded sky above, scrolls sidewards jerkily. The motorbike sprite is good but sound is just a high engine tone and a jittering skid.

The best visuals are from the motorbike customisation screen, which is probably the best part of the game. The large bike is very well drawn and parts fly out and into it as they are changed. There's also a distinct lack of other competitors, making play very tiresome. Save your money.
WL
Machine rating: 54%

choose a boxer to fight huge, bloodthirsty men and a trainer to help and advise him. Enter a championship and you'll be presented with a side view of a boxing ring, you and your opponents energy shown above. Joypad movements select various moves and waggling it gets you to your feet if you're knocked down. If you've got a multiple-joypad adaptor, up to seven can join you in Survival, a knockout tournament (no pun intended).

There's a different part of the game called simply Fighting. Here you make your way rightward and tackle various foes with karate-style moves. Money can be earned and collected to spend on equipment at a shop before entering a match.

Bullfight Boxing's sprites are crude and blocky side, animation simple and very mechanical, and backgrounds bland. The Fighting sprites (which sometimes flicker) are animated in just two frames and are as ordinary as the backgrounds. Music is okay but effects are harsh and hissy.

All-in-all, a very plain and uninteresting unarmed combat game that's a disappointment considering what the Engine's capable of.

WL

Machine rating: 60%

DRIVIN' FORCE
Digital Magic Software ■ Amiga ■ £19.99

If you're bored with racin' games that just let you control one vehicle, Drivin' Force is one to look out for. You can drive a buggy, Formula One car, truck, motorcross bike or sports car and choose the sex and nationality of the driver (they still look the same in the actual race no matter what combination you choose but still...). In Knockout competition, you must come fourth or above on each vehicle's five tracks, in Mini Knockout you must come third or above in the five tracks of a chosen vehicle. In League you play all the tracks in a random order and are awarded points dependin' on where you finish and in Mini League the tracks of your chosen vehicle are played at random.

The usual view of behind and slightly above the vehicle is given, usual racin' control convention applies and various displays around the screen give times, laps remainin', position and so on.

I was quite looking forward to Drivin' Force. From preview screenshots and demos, it was clear the 3-D graphics would be on the blocky side but I thought li'l' ole Digital Magic Software would be an underdog who came through with a hot racer, like Anco did with soccer. But it wasn't to be. Drivin' Force is a pale imitation of Power Drift, the ramps and suspended roads characteristic of that racer making a frequent appearance. There's no feeling of movement and no excitement or competitive spirit generated in Drivin' Force so you're much better off getting hold of Activision's excellent conversion of Power Drift. Get my drift...?

WL

Machine rating: 61%

CABAL
Ocean ■ Amiga ■ £24.99

Originally reviewed: TGM025

Graphically Cabal suffers a little because the chunky sprites look slightly awkward. Tunes on the Amiga are acceptable, but the ditties soon become annoying. Playability is what counts, though, and Amiga Cabal certainly has plenty of that.

MC

Machine update: 85%

CHASE HQ
Ocean ■ Amstrad CPC ■ £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Originally reviewed: TGM025

The yuletide's best (in my opinion) racing game has been very successfully transported to the CPC. Graphics are smooth and colourful, and sound effective with clear speech. It's nice to know that Ray and Tony are on the still on the job, and Ocean are still producing great games. It just goes to prove that 8-bit versions are better (the Spectrum version was great too!) in some respects than 16-bit ones.

MC

Machine update: 89%

CHICAGO 90
Infogrames ■ Amiga ■ £24.99

Originally reviewed: TGM026

Choose to be a cop or a villain and get ready for the chase of your life. Ok so I lied. It's all exactly the same as the ST offering: detailed cars, nice surroundings and pleasant sound. Only problem is the game which is far too boring to play for any extended period. Ho hum. You're bound to get some duff games when you turn out as many game as Infogrames are doing lately. It's just as well they have greats like Sim City, North and South, Drakkhen and Full Metal Planete to supplement them.

MC

Machine update: 60%

FIGHTER BOMBER
Activision ■ C64 ■ £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Originally reviewed: TGM024

The PC version received an excellent review when it appeared several issues back, and the C64 game is also very good. The polygon graphics are still present, which is good because they add a nice touch of realism to the proceedings. Plenty of options are available to keep the Mavericks and Icemen of this world happy, and the triff gameplay is still present. Fighter Bomber is a product that is worthy of consideration by buffs and non-simulation players alike.

Machine update: 85%

FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR II
Gremlin ■ Amiga ■ £24.99

The original was a strange mixture of trivia and reaction tests and the sequel is more of the same. Your aim is still the same, to become the top striker in the country.

Set your difficulty level and choose one of the 21 Super League teams and a country (from 16) to represent. The main icon screen displays avenues to your career stats, the state of affairs and double or nothing (amongst others).

Certain aspects of the game require money. This can be gained through placing bets on trivia questions. Here you can win up to £1000 just by answering a few footy

DARK CENTURY
Titus ■ Atari ST ■ £24.99

In the 23rd Century, prison overcrowding is solved by spacial detention centres. In addition to cells, recreation rooms, kitchens and so on, they each have a factory where the prisoners manufacture goods for the people back on Earth. Strangely, these factories produce sophisticated tanks.

Prisoners have taken over some tanks and have programmed them to explode as they leave the factory, blowing a hole in the satellite and providing a way to escape. You, a warder, must program and remotely control a number of the tanks to stop the prisoners' tanks from completing their programs.

For one or two players (prisoner vs the screw), the arena is dotted with energy bubbles that top-up the power of the two-to-six tanks taking part. Player one chooses the number of tanks he controls and obviously his maximum is one less than the total number – it wouldn't be much of a game with no opposition!

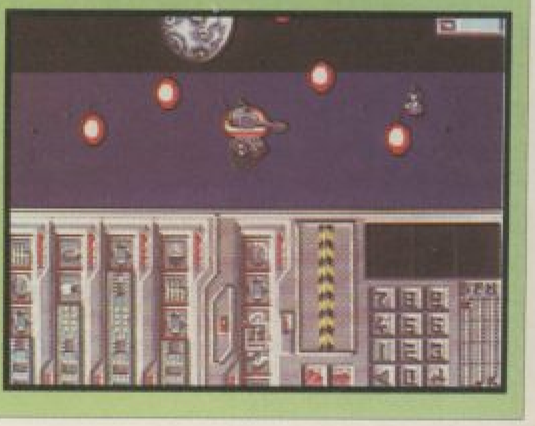
The tank graphics for the game were produced using a ray-tracing program but unfortunately, apart from the attractive rotating tanks at the beginning of each game, they are so small you can't see the shading properly. Tanks approach in slightly jerky 3-D and the backgrounds are virtually non-existent, just some stars and the occasional planet – the tanks appear to be floating. There are some pleasing metallic clangs and electrical hums among the sound effects.

Dark Century is an example of good ideas misdirected. Integrating ray-traced graphics into a game is one that could produce images of stunning and realistic high-tech vehicles but here there's just one tank. The programming is very interesting but there's little for it to be used on – only one type of opponent and no obstacles in the arena. Also, mouse control is overdone; figures would be much more easily entered via the keyboard rather than with number panels and pointer.

Dark Century has interesting things to offer but not enough of them to make it good value.

WL

Machine rating: 78%



questions.

Goalscoring is the main aim of the game. Prematch plans can set up goals for yourself during the match. After a fair tally of goals the scouts will come looking for you. Transfer opportunities can be purchased for £5000, and here an opposing team makes a bid for your skills. That's one way to fame and glory. You can also get national acclaim if the national team scouts like the look of you. Then there's a chance of playing for your country in the World Cup.

It's all a bit morally unsound, but FOTYII is still fun to play. The title tune sounds suspiciously similar to Gremlin's Super Cars' (TGM027), but is still impressive. Strategy aspects control your fate, and Kick Off fans will find nothing challenging in the match action. Still, it should still a few punters who can't wait for Player Manager.

MC

Machine rating: 75%

FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR II

Gremlin ■ Atari ST ■ £24.99

See the Amiga version for game details.

Same as the Amiga version, with decent tunes and spot effects. Worth a look for football fans.

MC

Machine rating: 74%

HEAVY UNIT

Taito ■ PC Engine ■ £24.95

Why have computer/console games, particularly shoot-'em-ups, got this thing abouts aliens and robots? Why not blast down dirty pots and plates with a squeezy bottle of washing-up liquid? Or assorted aphids with insect repellent? Heavy Unit is unfortunately similar to most games of the shoot-'em-up genre: the background scrolls horizontally while waves and waves of aliens attack your ship.

Backgrounds are colourful. Sprites are generally passable; while some are drab others are nicely designed, particularly the larger opponents. Sound effects are sharp and music lively.

Although Heavy Unit is well produced and playable, is there really a need for another R-Type-style horizontal blaster? It's a highly derivative, cliched game. Trigger-happy games players will lap up heavy Unit, but only experienced ones will stick with it – Heavy Unit is tough from the beginning and gets no easier. Consider your joypad and your wallet before purchasing.

WL

Machine rating: 77%

INTRUDER

UbiSoft ■ Atari ST ■ £19.99

As the title suggests, you are a foreign ship entering alien airspace. You're on a mission from your home planet to rid them from the evil, oppressive and soon-to-invade aliens. Looking not too dissimilar to R-type, your egg-shaped ship must fly through wave after wave of strange but deadly alien forces. They include glowing spheres, rotating dinner plates (!) and even toothbrushes (!!). You start with a low-powered laser, but with the destruction of each wave new appliances appear. These include point multipliers (from x2 to x5),

FIFTH GEAR

Hewson ■ Amiga ■ £19.99

See Atari ST version for gameplot.

There's little difference between this and the ST one. All in allthe game's a complete failure on 16-bits simply because of itsshallow content and strangely high price.

WL

Machine rating: 40%

FIFTH GEAR

Hewson ■ Atari ST ■ £19.99

You're fed up with the traffic jams on the M25 (car park of thefuture), peeved by the contraflow on the M6 and agitated by theworkman drilling up the road just outside your house. What'smore, you absolutely loathe and detest those inane car stickersyour forced to see ('My other sticker's even less amusing thanthis pathetic excuse for wit'). You've had **enough**. It'stime for rebellion.

You've entered an illegal rally to vent your anger on cars. Ittakes place on a vertically scrolling strip of land and you'vegot machine guns built into the front of your car, just to keepthe others on their toes. They're similarly armed but you cancollect other devices along the way.

Scrolling's smooth but backgrounds are flat and repetitive,sprites are simple and short of colour. Title music'sold-fashioned but interesting, sound effects are forgettable andthe control system's unresponsive.

Fifth Gear was a budget game for 8-bits a few years back and Hewson have clearly decided to resurrect it in favour of newideas. This wouldn't be so bad but 16-bit Fifth Gear is atfull-price! It has budget quality graphics and sound, and awkwardcontrol, yet is twenty quid. At a fiver its fast action would befine but at four times that you're better off spending the moneyat an arcade.

WL

Machine rating: 40%



DEATHTRACK

Activision ■ PC ■ £24.99

DeathTrack is the latest in a long line of gratuitously violent sports (like Speedball and Skateball). And as the title suggests you have to race — to the death — around the American continent. You've a choice of three vehicles: The Hellcat, The Crusher and The Pitbull, each with their own capabilities.

After choosing your car you must equip it with various components (brakes, tyres, armour) using a measly #10000. Now onto the track. Receiving a missile hit registers on your damage indicator; you've also an autopilot indicator, fuel gauge, rear view mirror, HUD (used to target weapons) and a lap counter. Any damage or fuel loss can soon be rectified with a quick trip to the pits... and a layout of more dosh. Some players also have bounties on their heads so pursuing an individual player often brings satisfactory remuneration.

The impressive graphics of DeathTrack, from the digitised mug shots of your enemies to the polygon cars zooming



around the track, make it totally engrossing. The only real problem is the enormous amount of dials that have to be looked after. Still, this is probably the most fun I've had playing a PC game for a long while.

the race (after a shrewd practice). There are ten different tracks to race around. The number of laps is variable, as is your skill level, but what you can do nothing about is the general death and mayhem inflicted by your opponents.

Your car is equipped with numerous goodies, all placed to enhance your drive — and some to blow the other mothers off

MC

Machine rating: 82%

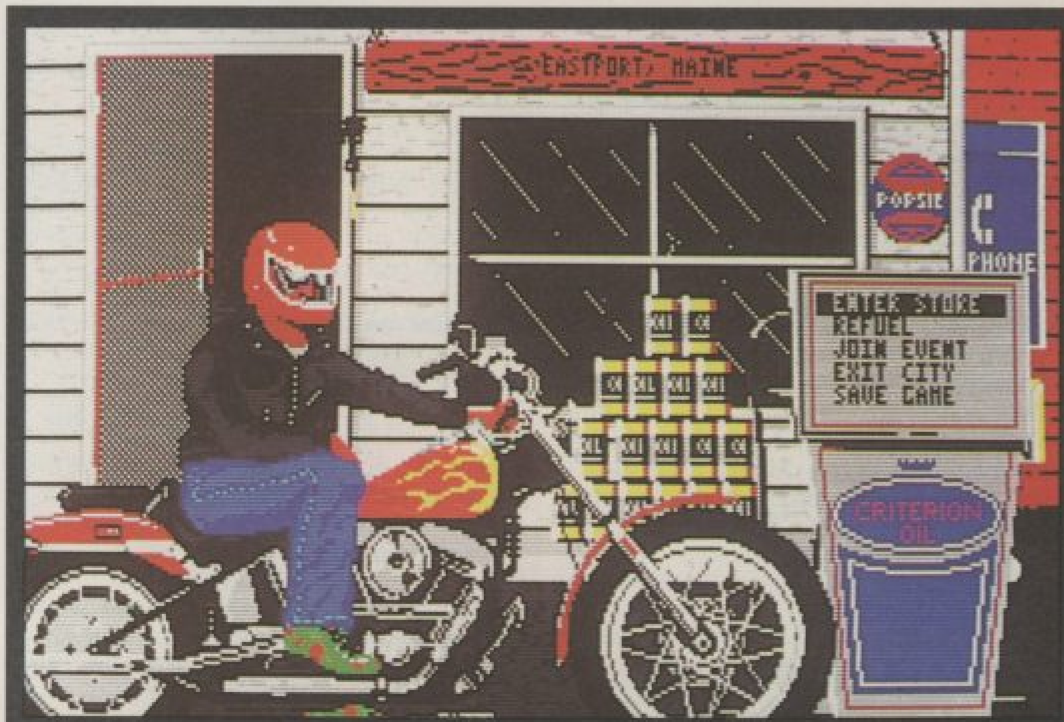
HERZOG ZWEI
Techno Soft
■ Sega Mega Drive ■ £29.95

This, without doubt, is one of silliest named video games I've ever played or heard of (and I've played *a lot*). But it's an unusual product for the 16-bit Sega console: a strategy game. Against the console or another player, an alien world is entered. Both sides have a base to work plus a number of outposts, depending on the type of game selected. As in many games, the aim is simply to capture the enemy flags before he takes yours, but in Herzog Zwei your sprite is a Transformer-style robot that can become a jet aircraft. Other forces can be despatched from your bases to defend from attack.

Bases and outposts have a convincing metallic sheen and although some planets have dull backgrounds others are attractively shaded in many colours. Sprites are rather plain but transform well and the scrolling's smooth. Sound effects are sharp and futuristic, and while music is highly derivative, it suits the game.

But strategy on a console. Wonders will never cease? But it has to be stated that it's really a multi-direction shoot-'em-up with one or two tactical possibilities. Whether it's intended to get strategists to consider buying the console or to broaden the horizons of trigger-happy lunatics, I don't know. Either way, it's quite refreshing and can be quite addictive in two-player mode, fierce rivalry developing between friends.

WL
Machine rating: 75%



HARLEY DAVIDSON – THE ROAD TO STURGIS
Mindscape ■ PC ■ £24.99

What is Sturgis you may ask yourself. Well it's a town in America where once a year bikers gather for a week-long party. You have ten days to reach Sturgis and prove your worth as one of the bro's.

The longer your hair, the harder the task, and the higher the points reward. Skill points are gained for brawling, mechanics skill, charisma and money. Though, to become the ultimate bike god, you have to look the part. A visit to the local shop will soon tog you up in the right gear and prepare you for the long and eventful journey to Sturgis.

Riding along the highway can become a mite tedious, but the attention to detail – especially on the biker's foot when changing gear – is impressive.

If you want to cut up a few bikers without risking life and limb, Harley Davidson – The Road To Sturgis could be just the ticket. It's certainly one of the most original games this month.

MC
Machine rating: 79%

power-up weapons, energy pods and the normal bonus points. Weapons such as mega-power lasers and homing missiles come in very useful against the end-of-level tough guys, but can be easily lost by travelling over the evil green spheres.

It's all been done before but Intruder features some noteworthy metallic graphics. Pity the sound isn't as original; just annoying. Still, shoot-'em-ups are all the same, aren't they? Almost...

MC
Machine rating: 74%



JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL
Electronic Arts ■ C64 ■
£14.99

John Madden is little (if at all) known in the UK but apparently he's an ex-American football player, who recently co-commentated on CBS/Channel Four's Superbowl coverage (well, there's a thing!). He's also the host of EA's first such footy game.

Statistics on the teams you control and oppose can be viewed and altered. There's a wide selection of plays; 81 defensive and 81 offensive. The plays can be made by joystick, automatically by computer or a combination of both. They can also be edited or created from scratch.

A very scruffy-looking game. Digitised pictures of fat Madden are vague and grainy. The pitch is plain and its scrolling is jerky, with small and poorly animated sprites. Sound is little more than bleeps of acknowledgment.

The list of American football games grows ever longer, but none have had any impact since Cinemaware's TV Sports Football, in March 89. John Madden Football doesn't change that. True, it has an impressive quantity and variety of plays but its visuals are so bad and unrealistic, generating zero excitement and little involvement. Stick with a real pigskin.

WL
Machine rating: 59%

MR HELI
Hudson Soft ■ PC Engine ■
£29.95

Originally reviewed: TGM022
With a whirr of rotor blades, Mr Heli zooms onto the PC Engine with all the style and cute graphics of the Irem arcade original. The sprites are colourful, attractive and amazingly detailed. If you've been put off by any of the other versions of Mr Heli, give the big chopper another go. This is probably the best version yet.

MC
Machine update: 83%

PC ENGINE KID
Hudson Soft ■ PC Engine ■
£29.95

His real name is Pithecanthropus Computerurus. The name is a long one, but our baby-faced hero, although small in stature, is well versed in the art of the Glaswegian Handshake. The little chap is taken back millions of years, to the Prehistoric Era, where he must overcome all manner of vicious inhabitants and probably rescue someone. (*Probably*. Japanese wasn't my second language at school, y'know!) The strange creatures are soon disposed of with a sharp head-butt from Pithy's big 'ed.

Progression through the levels soon reveals plants containing various goodies. Along with smiley faces (which increase jump power), there are hearts (energy), fruit (bonus points) and pieces of chilli. The latter sends the young fella into convulsions and soon gets his temperature up for some serious action. A second piece of the hot stuff makes old Pithy invincible.

I can honestly say I haven't seen a game as funny as this since Chan and Chan (also on the Engine). Even though our hero is a wee lad he certainly dishes out some serious hassle to the plethora of Jap attackers. All the graphics are great. Foregrounds are well-detailed and animated, with backgrounds containing all the colour and originality of the most addictive Engine games.

Some of the later levels (like travelling through the insides of a dinosaur) are pure inspiration. Any self-respecting gamesplayer can't fail to appreciate the amount of time and effort gone into PC Engine Kid. Essential purchase number 15 of this month, I'm happy to say!

MC
Machine rating: 82%

KNIGHT RIDER SPECIAL
Pack-In-Video ■ PC Engine ■
£24.95

'Knight Rider, a shadowy journey into the world of a man who does not exist...' Remember the asthmatic voice-over that accompanied the boppy muzak to this tacky series? No, me neither... But anyway, in this game you're dim hero Michael Knight, under the watchful eyes of Devon, the snobby boss, and Bonnie, the raunchy mechanical expert with an identity crisis. And of course, you drive the computerised car with the sickeningly smug voice, KITT (Knight Industrial Two Thousand).

Your mission is a very simple one. Within a time limit, get from A to B, B to C, C to D, D to... Well, you get the idea. There are other vehicles on the road, of course, but when you're armed with laser guns and other such handy appliances, no problem. Just blow the suckers away. If they're the sort of fools who've still got a Comic Relief red nose tied to the front, they deserve all they get.

The conventional racing viewpoint of behind and slightly above the car works fine. Speed and perspective reasonable, although there's relatively little road on-screen and the illusion of movement is minimal. Sprites are dull and the spinning of KITT when he crashes is pathetic. There are some good digitised portraits of Michael, Devon and Bonnie. KITT's speech is a little too high pitched - possibly something to do with the fact that it's all in Japanese.

As a game and especially as a Knight Rider licence, this stalls soon after leaving the garage. Or, more appropriately, the Knight Industries 16-wheel truck.

WL
Machine rating 63%

NINJA WARRIORS
Virgin/The Sales Curve
■ Amstrad CPC ■ £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

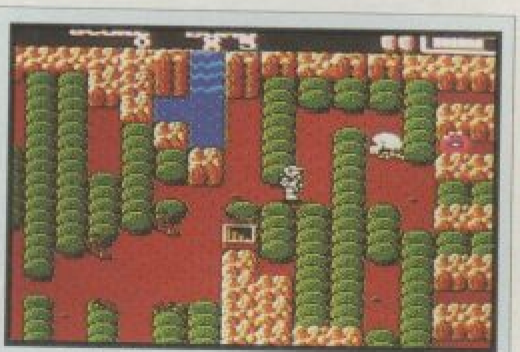
Originally reviewed in TGM026
A big, big let down compared to the other conversions. Blocky, crudely animated Legoland sprites wander across equally simple and gaudy backgrounds. Scrolling's slow and juddery and sound effects are harsh. Gameplay barely survives.

MC
Machine update: 58%

ROBOWARRIOR
Jaleco ■ NES ■ £29.99

It may come as a surprise to you, but in the distant future the Earth will be dying due to over-population and pollution. But the governments solve the problem by employing a brilliant scientist to build an artificial home for the whole of mankind. In 2395 the colonists arrive, but not long after aliens invade driving the new inhabitants underground. They also alter the planet's weather control systems so that the once green and peaceful land is covered in snow and ice. The humans send an SOS to earth, and a Z-Type Earth Defence cyborg (ZED) is sent to help. With his beam gun and limited supply of bombs he stands ready to face the meddling aliens.

Bombs are used to clear a path through the bush-like obstacles that block your path, whilst the gun is used for despatching the wide variety of alien weirdos. The destruction of the obstacles occasionally reveals icons, these include bombs, more powerful weapons and medals (used to buy goods in 'shopping centres'). When all the aliens have been despatched the exit to the next level can be found.



Sounds great doesn't it? Sadly, it's not. The small, almost misshapen hero marches along, kills an alien etc and... that's about it. The only relief from tedium is to pick up the special powers. The backgrounds are as static as the action; the obstacles change colour from level to level but the actual layout remains the same. Granted, the aliens are pretty tough to beat. But make sure that you have a good supply of matchsticks and strong coffee handy.

MC
Machine rating: 47%

PRO TENNIS TOUR
Ubi Soft ■ PC ■ £24.99

Originally reviewed: TGM023, as Great Courts.
Other than some slightly strange colours (if using EGA – *very* strange if in CGA), very similar in appearance to the Amiga original: clearly drawn perspective court, big, pleasantly drawn sprites and smooth, realistic ball movement. Sound grates, of course, but the gameplay is just as good – as long as you don't try to play using the keyboard!

MC
Machine update: 84%



OUTLANDS
Pandora ■ Amiga ■ £19.99

Stupid humans. In 2037, aliens will come to Earth, apparently in peace. And us humans believe them. Of course, aliens being what they are, they drive us away from our home and we're forced to develop a colony on Mars. But then they come after us *there*! Gits!

This time we're ready. In this simultaneous two-player game, vertical levels are negotiated in spaceships while fighting off waves of aliens. Weapons left behind by destroyed enemies enable firepower to be built up.

All graphics are short of colour, particularly the backgrounds, which scroll in mildly jerky two-layer parallax. The backgrounds and sprites are simple and boring to look at and attack waves, bullets and so on are updated in visible jumps. Sound effects are a mixture of lively and weedy sci-fi samples.

Shoot-'em-ups are ten-a-penny. Outlands is a simple, cliched and boring one, poor graphics and woolly control response an instant turn-off. The simultaneous two-player 'action' helps redeem it a little but not enough to make this anywhere near worth £20.

WL
Machine rating: 31%

SHOOT-'EM-UP CONSTRUCTION KIT
Outlaw ■ Atari ST ■ £29.99

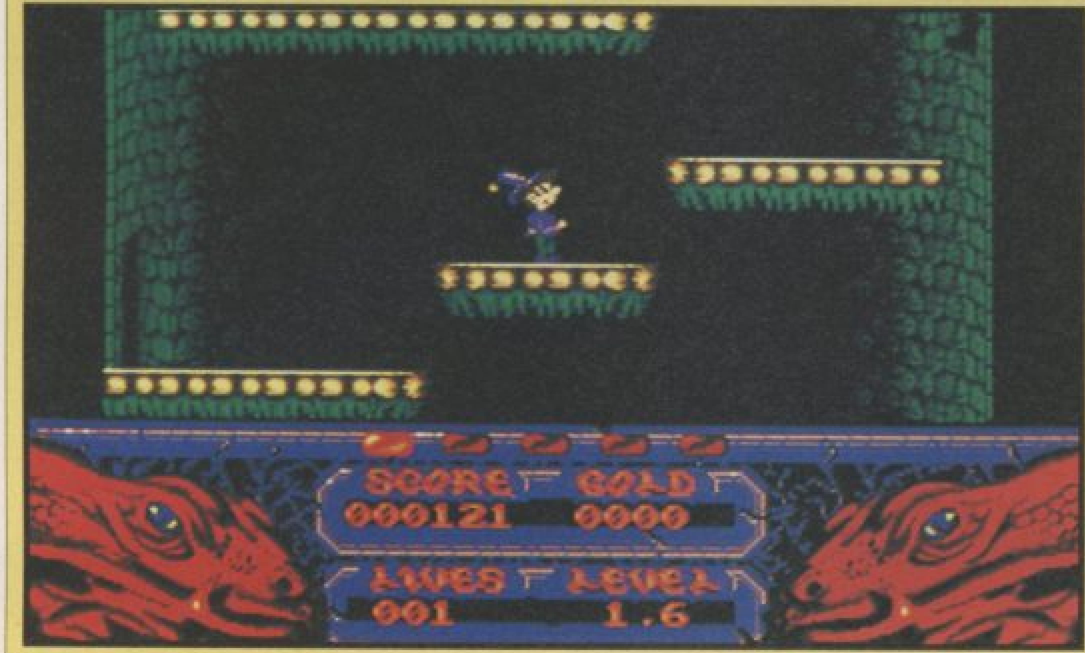
...Or SEUCK, as it's affectionately known, puts you in the shoes of a games designer and programmer. Menu-driven, it allows you to create static-screen or vertically scrolling shoot-'em-ups with graphics, sound effects and attack waves all tailored to your own preferences.

Graphics are designed using built-in utilities then positioned on a map to form the

THE SEVEN GATES OF JAMBALA
Thallion ■ Amiga ■ £24.99

You're a cute little elf called Dravion and must use the seven gates of the title to reach the seven cities of Jambala, each of which contains a piece of a powerful magic wand. The cities take the form of horizontally scrolling levels, constructed from platform networks and patrolled by various nasty beasts, notably some large dragons. Spells are learnt from more friendly creatures and are used for offence, whilst various items may be found for later use.

Presentation is high, with a cinematic title sequence showing coloured droplets rolling down the screen then the Thallion logo gliding into the screen. In-game, backgrounds are bright and detailed but most sprites are weak. Dravion looks and moves amusingly and the huge dragons are impressive. There's a number of quality tunes with neat effects and scrolling's smooth.



Although the visuals and aurals of The Seven Gates of Jambala are good, gameplay is less than compelling. Platform shoot-'em-up arcade adventures (a long title for a straightforward concept) are long in the tooth and these days must have new features or(/and) high playability to be worthwhile. The Seven Gates of Jambala has neither. It's not *bad* but not good, and certainly not magic.

WL
Machine rating: 71%

THE SEVEN GATES OF JAMBALA
Thallion ■ Atari ST ■ £19.99

See Amiga version for gameplot.
Very similar to the Amiga version; colourful graphics, good sound (though less impressive than the Amiga) but gameplay cliched and only of passing interest.

WL
Machine rating: 71%

game's background or animated to make the ships, bullets, explosions and so on. Enemy attacks waves are programmed by tracing their intended path with joystick movements, and player limitations (lives, speed, manoeuvring area and so on) set. Finally, add the sound effects and you're ready to play your own game – or test your friends' gaming skills with it.

There are three free games with SEUCK: Slap 'N' Tickle, a p' take of the coin-op Slap Fight; Blood 'N' Bullets, a Commando variant; and PsychoBlast, where enemies surround the player, who's stranded in the middle of the screen.

Other than the free games, graphical quality depends upon the user's skill, although it must be pointed out that the scrolling is juddery. Sound is more limited, restricted to weak, distinctively ST effects – samples would have used up memory otherwise put to good use on attack waves, but would've improved game impact.

Much fun can be had with SEUCK, particularly when designing and animating enemies, and completing the creation of your very own game is highly rewarding. It's a shame that horizontally scrolling games aren't possible to allow more varied blasters to be made. This wouldn't be too bad a problem but at £29.99 SEUCK is quite expensive. Shoot-'em-up fans will love it; others won't be as enthusiastic but should still consider it.

WL
Machine rating: 74%

SHINOBI
Asmik/Sega ■ PC Engine ■ £29.95

Originally reviewed :TGM 014
No matter how much you try ,you can't get your ten pencepiece into the slot at the front of the PC Engine. Which is a pity as that's all that's missing from this latest conversion of the beat-'em-up coin-op. Graphics and animation are arcade quality, which goes without saying on most PC Engine games. Also taken for granted is the consistent playability of arcade conversions on consoles – Shinobi is probably *more* playable than I remember! Impressive credentials for such an old genre, but ones that make it an essential purchase for all Engineers.

MC
Machine update: 88%



THE UNTOUCHABLES
Ocean ■ Amiga ■ £24.99

Originally reviewed: TGM024
What more can be added to the comments made about this game already adorned upon it? Ocean have got the heavy boys out to do the biz on the Amiga version too! Graphics are possibly better than the ST version (still with the great detail and animation), accompanied by some super Twenties-style ragtime tunes. All Amiga-owning Eliot Nesses apply here...

MC
Machine update: 85%



WIZARDS AND WARRIORS
Acclaim/Rare ■ NES ■ £29.99

Legend says that Malkil the wizard was the teacher of the great Merlin, but the years haven't been kind to him. He has turned to thh dark side and now uses his magic for evil. Shockingly, he has taken the Princess captive.

So, as Kuros, you enter the woods of Elrond in search of Castle Ironspire, Malkil's stronghold. Your trusty blade Brightsword despatches most oncomers, but some possess the dark power and aren't afraid to use it against you. Though you aren't powerless in the magic department yourself. Amongst others, the Axe of Igor, the Cloak of Darkness and Boots of Force give protection when found. Gems can be collected and used to bribe the minions who guard the level guardian.

Wizards and Warriors is a typical platform game; plenty of leaping around is needed to reach some of the more inaccessible areas. Graphically the game isn't brilliant, it's colourful but the sprites lack detail. Sound is also a bit of a disappointment; a mediocre tune plays on the title screen but in-game sounds are limited to a few clunk, clank effects. Simple addiction but little in the longrun.

MC
Machine rating: 70%



F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER
MicroProse ■ Spectrum ■
£9.95 cass, £14.95 disk

Originally reviewed: TGM015
As is usual with MicroProse products, the million page (or so it seems) instruction manual must be absorbed to the full. It's all worthwhile, though. The Spectrum version is both graphically and sonically sound. The wire-frame graphics are well constructed, with the occasional sound effect (like the chatter of machine gun fire or the whoosh of a missile release) adding to the atmosphere. Accuracy is up to the usual MicroProse standard. F-19 Stealth Fighter is certainly worthy of consideration from Speccy flight simmers.

MC
Machine update: 82%

THE DUEL – TEST DRIVE II
Accolade ■ AMSTRAD ■
£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Originally reviewed: TGM019
The graphics on the CPC are what you'd expect, ie, very colourful and blocky. Sound is limited to vroomy engine noises and a smash, bang, tinkle effect when you crash. This is old hat now, Accolade, but some of you out there might not be quite as tired of this as me.

MC
Machine update: 56%

VOLFIED
Taito ■ PC Engine ■ £24.95

Correct me if I'm wrong (you usually are – Ed) but this game (or at least its concept), apparently a conversion of a Taito coin-op, appeared a few years back on the C64 under the name of Zolyx. As it's such a simple concept, it probably first appeared long before then. See if it sounds familiar to you...

A small ship is steered around the edge of a rectangular playing area, which has a number of enemy ships bouncing around inside it. The ship can leave the safety of the edge and venture inwards, leaving a trail behind it. If an enemy or bullet touches it during this time, a life is lost. But if it gets back to the edge, the area enclosed by the edge and trail is filled in, shrinking the size of the playing area and altering its shape. When 75% or more has been filled, the level's complete. If a pod is enclosed within a filled area it gives things like an extra life, a laser or a freezer, to halt the enemies for a time.

Volfied isn't much to look at. Backgrounds are plain and other than big enemies sprites are small and simple, but there's a nice animated control panel between levels. Sound consists of a few irritating basic effects, the most aggravating being the droning background noise.

There's no doubting the playability of this simple yet highly intriguing game. Although you're basically just travelling from A to B while avoiding enemies, there's skill and strategy needed to reach the elusive 75%-plus. Luck is often required to make it to the edge before an enemy touches your trail and it can be very frustrating to lose a life just before you reach the edge.

Volfied's problem is that it soon becomes very difficult (and more dependent) and there's no continue-play facility. What's more, virtually the same game (Zolyx) can be bought for computers for a measly two quid.

WL
Machine rating: 74%

WAR OF THE DEAD
Victor ■ PC Engine ■ £24.95

It's just typical, isn't it? You kill off plagues of vile and revolting monsters ravaging your homeland, and what happens? Some supernatural force reanimates them and you've got a plague of *undead* vile and revolting monsters. And you, as the girl leader of S-SWAT (Supernatural and Special Weapons Attack Team), must assemble your crew and get rid of them.

You explore a large multi-directional scrolling area similar to a map and, on crossing certain points, the viewpoint switches to a sideways scrolling scene where the undead monsters attack. Killing them with whatever weapon you have at hand (initially a knife or dagger) makes them drop useful items, later selected from a menu screen.

The graphics on the scrolling map are small, repetitive and very boring. The sprites in the sideview combat screens are quite unattractive but that's fine because the monsters are *supposed* to be ugly! The green-haired heroine sprite looks quite like Wonder Momo (reviewed a couple of issues back) and moves well across the unobtrusive smooth scrolling backgrounds.

War of the Dead tries to be a cross between an arcade adventure and a creepy hack 'n' slay action game but only really succeeds in being the latter. The exploration/arcade adventure section is generally an unwanted interruption. Okay for a few plays but ultimately rather lifeless.

WL
Machine rating: 62%

ZOMBI
UbiSoft ■ Atari ST ■ £19.99

It is written that when there is no room left in hell the dead come back to life. The devil has seen fit to cast many unfortunate souls into the world of mortals, and as they are very hungry they'll eat all they can get. The zombies are on the rampage and there are only four 'live' people who survive their onslaught. The 'norms' only means of escape is via helicopter. One problem, though: no fuel. Bummer.

Play one of the characters, explore dark corridors and shops, but at all costs find the fuel. Shops contain food, illumination devices and weapons. Three guns (for the guys) and an axe (for the gal) are available to help you fend off the undead.

This game is horrible, I don't mean gameplay wise I'm talking about the subject matter – it's so-o-o creepy. I nearly jumped out of my seat the first couple of times a zombie attacked. They look like something out of a real-life horror movie, so pull the curtains, turn off the lights and prepare for a new nightmare!

MC
Machine rating: 77%

ZOMBI
UbiSoft ■ Amiga ■ £24.99

See Atari ST version for gameplot.
With the layout exactly the same as the Atari version, Amiga Zombi is as good. The mission to survive zombie attacks, find fuel and escape is still a tough one. Graphically similar to the ST version, the Amiga features improved sound (of course). However, the tunes aren't anything to really shout about, with the spot FX having most impression. Horror movie buffs take a peek (from behind the sofa preferably).

MC
Machine rating: 79%

Too good to be true?
An Amiga sound sampler plus software for under £40?
Robin 'mixmaster' Candy puts Microdeal's Master Sound to the test...

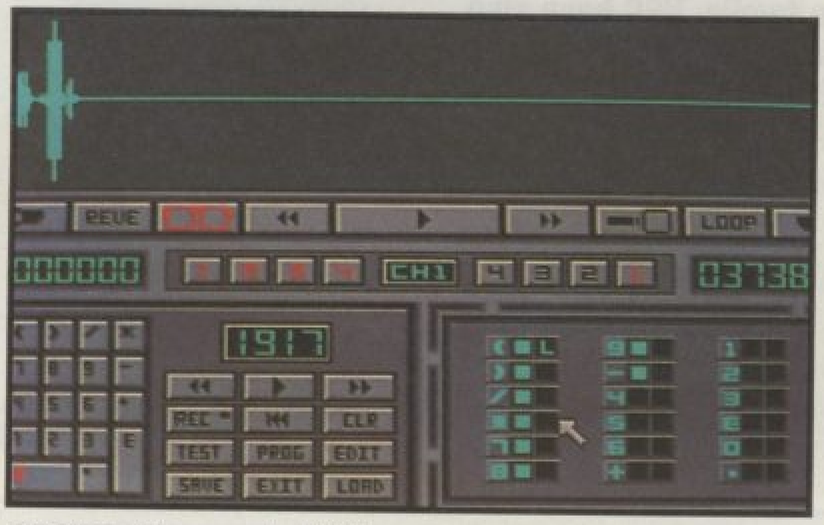
Master mixes

Sound samplers for any computer normally cost more than the £39.95 asking price for Master Sound. True, you can buy the basic hardware for about the same price but Master Sound also includes sample editing software and simple a sequencer. With sampling and playback rates of up to 56.6Khz it all sounds too good to be true.

Once the software has been loaded, the first task is to set the input level of the sound source. An oscilloscope at the bottom-right corner of the screen displays the current level of the input source as a moving waveform which corresponds to the volume level of the sound source. If the volume level is too high the peaks of the waveform will disappear from the display. The optimum level is where the peaks are just within the display. Setting the correct input level for your sound source is an important aspect of sampling; if the level is too high, the sample will sound distorted, while if the level is too low it will sound quiet and hissy.

MASTER AND SERVANT

The main screen is divided into two main areas. The top of the screen displays any sample data currently in memory as a graphic waveform. This represents volume changes over time. Two cursor bars are used in this display to define which the section of the waveform is played. (These are used when you sample more than you actually wish to use.) Just below this display is the playback control panel with options including reverse play, scroll display left/right (used when all the sample data can't be fitted into the screen area), magnify



options and loop mode (which continuously plays the sample data within the two bars).

The editing panel contains all the controls needed to get your sample into a useable form. One of the handy controls is Listen To Input. This sends whatever sound is currently going into the sampler out through the monitor. It's used to help cue up your CD player/tape deck etc and also provides an audible check on the input setting. It's not a particularly impressive function but it is a useful one which many samplers (including some professional units) neglect.

A spectrum analyser option displays a realtime moving break down of all the different incoming sound frequencies. Each band of frequencies gets its own bar, just like a spectrum analyser on a hi-fi in fact. So you can tell at a glance what frequencies a sound contains and in what proportions — helping you set your sample rate. The point of this is to help you set your sample rate. Sounds which consist mainly of lower frequencies can be sampled at lower rates than sounds made up of higher frequencies. You can save a considerable amount of memory by only sampling at higher rates when necessary. Master Sound also provides an alternative method of saving memory with a compress sample option. This reduces the memory occupied by the sample by 50%. To use the compressed sampled the playback rate must also be reduced by 50%. A compressed sample is slightly better quality than a straight low rate sample. While the filter command helps samples taken at lower frequencies sound less tinny. However, if this option is used repeatedly the sample starts to sound muffled.

RATING SAMPLING

Samples are created by taking 'snapshots' of the incoming sound, rather like a film camera takes photographs of motion in very quick succession. A sampler takes many thousands of these snapshots each second. The rate at which they are taken is measured in kiloherz. The higher the rate the more samples taken and the more accurate the representation of the original sound. Sample rate directly affects the fidelity of the sample being taken. Lower sample rates aren't capable of recording high frequencies. Samples containing high frequencies taken at a low sample rate tend to sound tinny.

ADLIB TO FADE

Also included in the editing panel are fade in/out options but they have very little practical use. You have no control over the level of fading in/out so if you try to fade in a short sample you end up losing it altogether.

There are no effects options but you can create a pseudo-echo by using the overlay icon. This mixes two samples together so if you overlay the same sample over the top of itself with a slight displacement you end up with an slight echo.

Just like the ST version of Master Sound, the Amiga software includes a sequencer menu. This is very basic but you can use it to make your own sample demos. For instance you could sample different sections from the same song then link them together and overdub other samples over the top of the sequence (you can have up to four samples playing at once — one for each of the Amiga's sound channels) to get your own personalised mix. However, only samples recorded at 14.4Khz can be used and then a maximum of 18 different samples in any one sequence.

LOW - FI

The most important factor when assessing any sampler is the quality of samples that it produces. Master Sound has a long way to go before it can be regarded as one of the better Amiga samplers. Even when sampling at higher rates the samples often sound tinny. However, the package isn't claiming to be a semi-professional product the emphasis is more on fun and this is reflected in the lack of complicated editing commands and the inclusion of a basic sample sequencer. It's a good introduction to music on the Amiga and costs significantly less than comparable packages. The storage options allow samples to be saved in IFF format — the format used by many Amiga music packages such as Electronic Arts' Deluxe Music Construction Set and most Public Domain music programs. So for relatively little money youcan build a reasonable non-MIDI music set up.

Microdeal: PO Box 68, St Austell, Cornwall PL25 4YB. Tel: (0726) 68020.

OUR MAN IN Japan

There's not just one console launched this month in Japan, but TWO! Both of them are from NEC and both belong to the Engine family. NEC have also leaked news of an amazing hand-held PC Engine. Shintaro Kanaoya investigates...

Konnichi wa. Imagine you work at NEC. No, imagine you *own* NEC. Now imagine, if you will, that one day, some boys from the Home Electronics Department come up to you and present a fairly good looking console running some impressive little games. It goes on sale as the PC Engine (sounds familiar — Ed). It's an instant success — even in the States. Soon after, certain 16-bit machines begin to steal your thunder, so the boys come up with the Super Grafx. The new machine is an improvement over the original and has the bonus of a mega add-on called the Power Console. This, yet again, makes the public content. Or so you'd have thought...

Apparently, one new Engine is not enough for the diode-hungry public. The guys in the HED have throw yet more Engines into the marketplace. So now we have the Super Grafx (with approximately double the storage and display power), the PC Engine Shuttle and the PC Engine Core.

SHUTTLE SHUFFLE

The PC Engine Shuttle — as in space shuttle — is the young person's PC Engine. It's what you give the kids for Christmas if they've been nagging all year for a PC Engine and you feel like being patronising and condescending. The Shuttle is a cheap PC Engine, and a real bog-bog-bog standard one at that. It's about £25 less than your average Engine, coloured in the new NEC spray paint (grey, like the Super Grafx), and has two strange wings along the top of it. Either this is the most aerodynamic computer since the ZX81 or it's an attempt to look like something out of Battlestar Crapactica. Apart from the obvious 'trend' value, the Shuttle is lacking one important feature that has made the original such an attraction — the extension port. Yes, that's right, there's no place to slot your CD-ROM or printer in. Although, it does have a connector for a battery back-up. And it (like the others in the new range) comes bundled with the new controller pad, Turbo Pad 2 (like the old one with adjustable rapid fire).



1 ■ Locks carts into Core, power on
2 ■ ROM-card slot
3 ■ Even snooter control pad, with auto-fire
4 ■ Socket for even snooter pad
5 ■ AV socket
6 ■ Power supply socket



■ Breeding like rabbits! NEC has th... ther Super Grafx







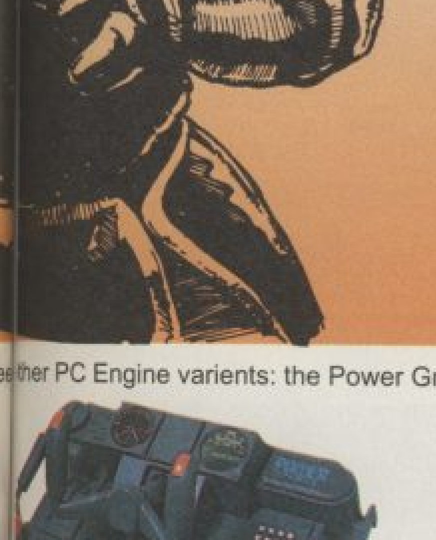
CORE, IT'S FAMILIAR

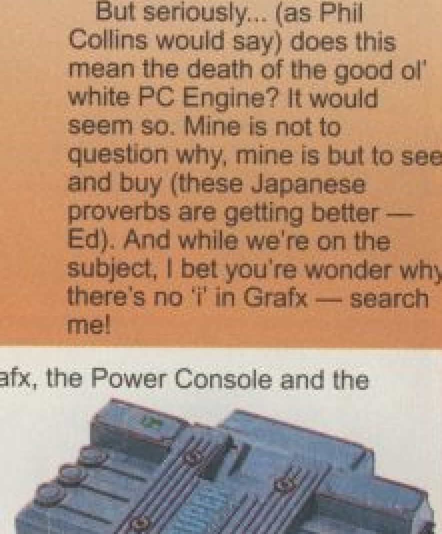
But the big news (heavy sarcasm) is the arrival of the PC Engine Core Grafx. Boy, is this one heck of a machine! A truly mammoth quantum leap over the original Engine. This Core Grafx is remarkably the same shape, the same size, the same price as the original but it's grey, with blue motif. So what's the difference between this and the original? Ummm... nothing (nice colour, though).

So now you have four different Engines, five if you include the American one. Collect them all. Get a free receipt with each purchase. Collect four receipts and make a paper dart.

But seriously... (as Phil Collins would say) does this mean the death of the good ol' white PC Engine? It would seem so. Mine is not to question why, mine is but to see and buy (these Japanese proverbs are getting better — Ed). And while we're on the subject, I bet you're wonder why there's no 'i' in Grafx — search me!

ther PC Engine varients: the Power Grafx, the Power Console and the





LYNX LAUNCH

Now onto lighter things (well, not as light as the Game Boy). Like the Atari Lynx. I know this is Marshal's area but he's so rich I'm sure he won't mind if I say a few words. The Lynx was launched in Japan on November 20, and it seems to have been fairly well received, although it didn't get anywhere near the sales of the Game Boy over Christmas. It costs almost twice the price of a Game Boy (with a similar weight and size difference). There's no doubting the Lynx's power, but is it really the hand-held everyone's claiming? It certainly won't fit in our little Japanese pockets (filled up with too much money, no doubt — Ed), and I wouldn't fancy the chances of the screen if I dropped the thing on a train. There's also that price! For £130 over here, I could get a Game Boy with six games, a PC Engine or numerous bottles of saki. This is the main reason, I feel, it'll fail to sell in the quantities expected.

And guess what? It seems that along with the much rumoured coloured version of the Game Boy (to reach the UK in October), they'll also be hand-held version of the PC Engine available. Details are a bit sketchy at time of writing, but it seems the little thing is nearing prototype stage and should be able to run existing PC Engine games. It's also a touch lighter than the Game Boy and has a screen size of three inches. Perhaps those guys in NEC development have been working, after all.

FAR EASTER PROMISE

In mid-March on the PC Engine come Tiger Road and New Zealand Story. What you might describe as soft, strong and very unoriginal. In fact, I've yet to see a very good original game on the PC Engine. I've seen those great games that are easily accessible in the UK, the likes of Sim City, for instance. You've never had it so good... Speaking of Sim City, may I just say that Tokyo has its share of problems — overcrowding, pollution, disgusting amounts of money, etc — but there aren't, and never have been, any monsters roaming the streets or rooftops of Tokyo. I hate to break a myth in this humble column but they were actually films. Obviously an easy mistake to make, I'm sure.

The next big Engine game to look out for is Darius on the CD-ROM in incredible Dolby surround sound. But wait, what's this? Something in the distance, it looks like, no it can't be, but it is — it's Space Invaders, the Taito original. Well, actually it's Space Invaders: The Day of the Revenge. But what real difference is it going to make. A bit of graphics, a bit of sound. Just dressing up an old idea. Like Shadow of the Beast, really.

Well, I suppose that's it for one more issue, one more month. And I'd like to close on a fairly cheery note. Some of you out there may watch Sumo on Channel 4. When I was last in England I caught a bit of it and I must congratulate Lyall Watson, the presenter, on doing a terrific job in conveying what is (to the untrained eye) a very silly sport. And those of you that think it's a load of naked fat geezers should check out The Boss, The Wolf and Chiyonofuji. Light and thinner than most, but without doubt the best there has been for quite some time. In the most recent championship, Konishiki, who had been going through a bad patch, came back with 14 wins out of 15 matches to win his first ever tournament. To regular viewers this will be great news. (Whoever said TGM doesn't cover all tastes?) On that overweight note, I leave you.

Wishing you a very happy month to come, and looking forward to seeing you in 28 days. Sayonara or shitsurei shimasu or even ja, mata if we're getting really friendly...



BELOW T

Origami and Bonsai grand master, Robin Candy, gets his paper weight and hedge clippers out as he prepares to do battle with the greatest beat-'em-ups and brusiers to have appeared on computer and console format.

"This is probably the most unusual game to be seen on the Spectrum for a long while." That quote appeared in our sister magazine Crash in December 1984. What was it describing? A startling new graphics technique? The first icon driven game? Some new puzzle game? No, a Bug Byte game called Kung Fu. Beat-'em-ups have been with us for five years now and a recent surge in martial arts orientated games (five different bruisers reviewed this issue alone) shows that their popularity has never been stronger.

Kung Fu's release in 1984 was somewhat overshadowed by another Bug Byte game, Turmoil. At the time, nobody realised that Kung Fu would lead to a whole new game genre.

Only four moves were available in Kung Fu, and one of those was a defensive block. A two–player option extended its interest but basically it was an above average game with little going for it other than, at the time, its originality.

Around about the same time a then fledgling US Gold were releasing American software over here. One of the titles was Bruce Lee. It was a varient on the well worn platform game scenario. Negotiating the various hazzards as Bruce, it was your task to collect all the lanterns from the screen before progressing to the next screen. To make the task harder two enemy warriors were pitted against you. In true Bruce Lee fashion you could use flying kicks and chops to temporarily dispatch your opponents.

If either of these games hinted at things to come, it was not until June 1985 that the beat-'em-up genre was really launched. Karate Champ had been a popular game in the arcades, but in those days the number of licenses was relatively few. Arcade games had to be huge hits before any software house was prepared to pay out money for the official license. More often than not unlicensed lookalike games appeared. If they proved popular then another software house would then try to cash in on the fad and bring out the official version.

In the summer of '85 Melbourne House (then an independent software house) launched Way of the Exploding Fist on an unsuspecting public. Few games survive the test of time to be considered classics. Way of the Exploding Fist is one of the exceptions. Heavily based on Karate Champ, it pitted the player in one against one combat with either a computer or human opponent. Essentially it was a much better version of Bug Byte's Kung Fu; more moves, faster action and superb sound effects. It sold over 150,000 copies on the Spectrum and over half million across all formats. Software houses realised money was to be made from beat-'em-ups. Very soon every

■System 3's Last Ninja, seen here on the C64, is different to traditional beat-'em-ups as it contains arcade adventuring along with more traditional slice and dice elements.



THE BELT

conceivable contact sport was computerised.

Going back to 1986 there were games for kick boxing, boxing, sai karate (a form of karate where you beat your opponent with a stick), a gladiator game which was basically Exploding Fist with weapons and even a Judo game. However, licenses started to play a more prominent role in the selling of computer games. Under its Imagine label, Ocean released a version of Konami's arcade hit Yie Ar Kung Fu. It was a good conversion, particulary on the Amstrad CPC.

Perhaps the most unusual beat-'em-up license came from Gremlin Graphics. Way of the Tiger was based on the Fighting Fantasy books of the same name. The game was split into three separate sub games with three different forms of combat: unarmed combat (flying kicks, chops, punches and so on), pole fighting and samurai sword fighting. Each of the games were good but the combined package made it excellant value for money. By this time beat-'em-ups were becoming very much the norm. There were no new ideas, only the implementation of the fighting aspects of the game served to differentiate between the games. Some had great graphics others good sound effects but all were essentially the same.

In 1987 System 3 took beat em ups in a new direction with The Last Ninja. This game combined elements from arcade adventures with an addictive hack and slay sideline. From this point onwards



■ Classic coin-op punch ups are to be had in the Amiga version of Ninja Warriors. The coin-op features three screens. Home computer owners will have to make do with one.

BEST BRUISERS

Here is TGM's all–time top five hack and slay games. At least one of these games should be part of your software collection

1 International Karate+

System 3

A reworking of International Karate resulted in what's regarded as the best ever beat-'em-up. The object of the game was simple – beat your opponents before they beat you. One of the novel aspects of the game is that instead of being faced with one opponent, you're up against two (either a second player and a computer opponent or two computer opponents). The ensuing free–for–all is incredible fun. CBM 64 and Amiga versions feature a great Rob Hubbard soundtrack.

2 Way of the Exploding Fist

Melborune House

The game that launched the whole beat-'em-up genre. Fours years after its original release it is still one of the best. It only ever appeared on the 8-bits; 16-bit owners are missing out on a classic. While battling against the computer provides a challenge, Exploding Fist really comes into its own when pitted against a human opponent. Few two-player games are as absorbing as this. Graphics are good with some nice backdrops while the screaming sound effects act as a great contrast to the soothing oriental music. Not only an important landmark in games history, but a damned good game to boot!

3 Budokan

Electronic Arts

A Star Player in our last issue no less! The aim of the game is to reach the Budokan and fight in the martial arts tournament. However, before you progress to full bone-crunching championship hopeful you've got to train in a variety of disciplines. You can fight in the championship but if you haven't trained then you won't stand a chance. When you do feel you're ready to take on the best you are given a short profile on your opponent. From the given information you've got to decide which of the disciplines you've trained is bet suited to tackling your opponent. So far Budokan has only appeared on the PC so the quality of graphics is dependent on the graphics board you have installed.

4 Shinobi

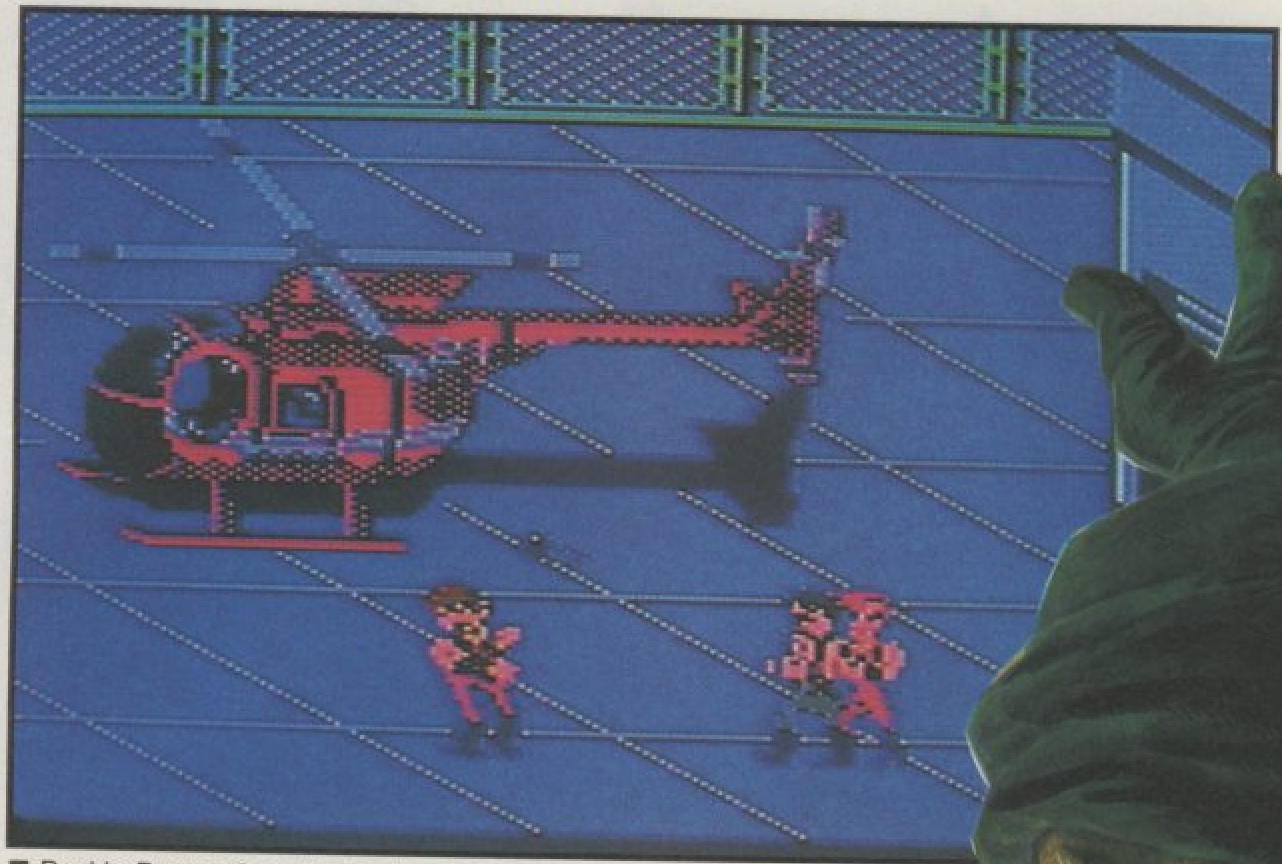
Virgin Mastertronic

Putting on the Ninja slippers of Joe Mushashi, secret agent, you have to run and jump through five horizontally-scrolling levels, throwing Shuriken stars at all and sundry (well, the bad person sprites anyway). Kicking elf-like hostages into the air gives extra points and abilities; the most useful of which is Ninja magic which acts like a smart bomb. At the end of each level there's a gang leader (or leaders) to slay – not easy. Computer conversions aren't recommended but some of the console versions are excellent. The 8-bit Sega version was one of the first games to earn a Star Player while the PC Engine version reviewed elsewhere in this issue shows how the consoles can sometimes out–shine computers. Although the PC Engine version is best both console versions use their machine well and accurately recreate the look and feel of the coin–op. For the best Shinobi version so far, check out the review of Super Shinobi on the Sega Mega Drive in this issue.

5 Ninja Warriors

The Sales Curve

Another recent release. Like the three-screen coin-op of the same name Ninja Warriors is a winner. Faced with the evil tyranny of a character called Bangler, you have to kick, chop and generally beat your way around the world to overthrow him. Six levels of slaughter have to be completed before you get to face Bangler. With tanks, dogs, spiders and knife weilding guards in your way this is no mean feat.



■ Double Dragon 2 on the Amiga puts you in control of a street fighter out for the blood of the thugs responsible for killing your girlfriend.



beat-'em-ups started to diversify combining elements from other popular games types.

Just when we thought the old style beat-'em-up was dead System 3 released the classic International Karate '. This really is the difinitive beat-'em-up. No scrolling screens, no flashy gimmicks – just pure unadulterated escapist violence. It took the scenario set in Exploding Fist further by adding extra opponents and more interesting bonus levels. 1988 and 89 were notable for the increase in beat-'em-up licenses. Double Dragon was disappointing, but Virgin scored a hit with an excellant conversion of the sequel Double Dragon II – The Revenge. The only major original game released during this time was Last Ninja 2 (once again from System 3). Andso that brings us up to date. Beat-'em-ups have been with us for five years. Just about every possible contact sport has been covered in at least one game.

So there you have it – the history of the beat-'em-up. If you flick through this month's TGM you'll notice an abundance of hack and slay games and there are more planned for release over the coming months. The genre, while getting more sophisticated, still retains its appeal.

Stateside chaos at the CES

When people in Las Vegas hear that a guy has jumped out of a third storey window with a TV set under his arm, the first thing they ask is, 'What size screen was it?' That's just the kind of place Nevada glitter-city is at this time of year. For January means the Consumer Electronics Show. Where all that's gold probably glitters, flashes and beeps too. Marshal M Rosenthal was there...

Although the Game Boy is not officially available in the UK yet, Nintendo are promising its imminent release. One Nintendo spokesman even let slip that October may be the month. However, till then, we'll keep you updated on the plethora of carts reaching our shores through the grey market.

Within the CES is the foreboding empire of Nintendo, the USA's most popular console producers. And with the country's top sales comes the country's strangest marketing campaign. Within the Nintendo Land you'll find: Mario beach towels, designer lunch boxes, street-cred controllers, Mario Bros cereal... the list goes on. Nintendo at the CES covers some 35,000 square feet. As one official put it: 'We could have used more, but the Vegas Convention Centre isn't big enough!'

Nintendo Entertainment System carts proliferate of course, but now it's Game Boy's turn to really shine. As was the case with the Nintendo console, the producers aren't too concerned with producing Game Boy carts themselves — they've some 20+ licensees to do it for them. (And there's a rumour floating around that two more Game Boys will be produced by the overlord in early 1990.) And unlike the first Nintendo-made carts (Tennis, Super Mario Land, etc), the third party games feature larger sprites and more varied situations. Many go for strategy and bedevil you with puzzles. Others just let you develop callouses from trying to rapid-smash that little red button.

While many companies are still planning their products, a few do have the cart far enough along to view, or, in some cases, to buy.

CASTLEVANIA — THE ADVENTURE

Konami

Swing your sword swiftly as you commence your quest amidst torture chambers and vampire crypts in pursuit of the evil Count. Locate hearts, crosses and secret crystals as you take on unearthly evils like the She Worm. Characters are large and 'tasty', so learning to control the Mystic Whip is vital. Backgrounds look as great as they are deadly.

WORLD BOWLING

Romstar

Faithful to the NES cart, you've a large area representing the alley, and your man can be manoeuvred in four directions. Working the joypad builds up the 'strength' of the ball, and the button release sends it on down to the pins. The game features good sound with fast moving animation, with my favourite bit happening when you get a strike — while you jump up and down, a pair of blonde (or green in Game Boy's case) cheerleaders chant behind you.

KWIRK

Acclaim

Kwirk is a cool tomato, and in a bit of a difficult spot. He's stuck in the middle of a world of mazes with little hope of escaping — unless you can guide him. There are two games, each with three difficulty levels. Going Up? requires Kwirk to realign blocks in order to move freely from right to left. While Heading Out? finds smaller, more packed mazes and horizontal scrolling. Extra hindrance is provided by your girlfriend (avoid at all costs) and a timer to keep you on your toes. But the best thing is the way this hyperactive guy is always bouncing up and down, making that funny squishing sound.

DOUBLE DRAGON

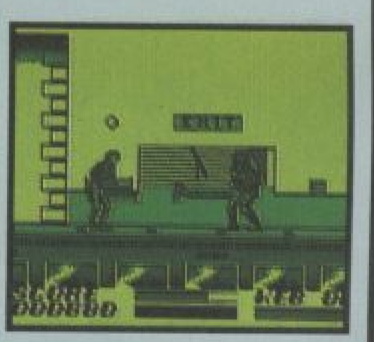
Tradewest

Action/adventure lovers are well catered for on the Game Boy. Based on its bigger counterparts, Double Dragon is as violent and addictive as all the other versions. Screen after horizontal screen of martial arts experts to dispose of. Not to mention nunchukkas, flying stars, pipes and other weapons. The perfect game to play while on the New York subway.

THE AMAZING SPIDERMAN

LJN

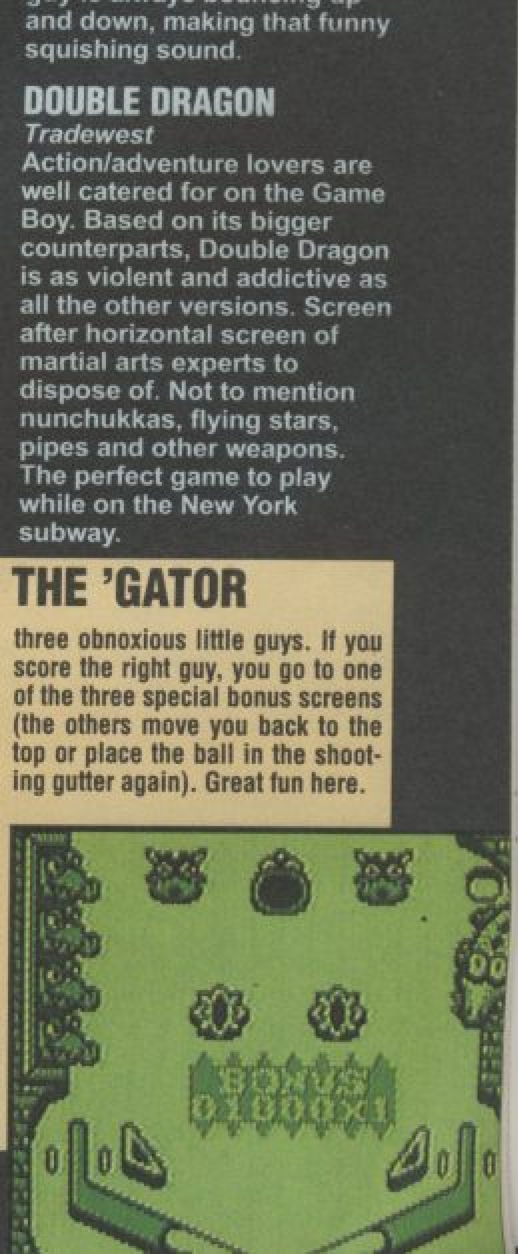
Mary Jane has been kidnapped, and it's up to Spidey to rescue her. This means taking on gun-toting bad guys, falling bricks, and nasty rats amoung other assorted vermin. Each level (some scrolling vertically, some horizontally) has an arch-villain waiting at the end. Whether it's a jaunt through the mean streets of New York to encounter Mysterio, or a battle on a moving subway car with the Scorpion: this is no picnic! But Peter Parker's alter ego's no wimp. Besides kicks and punches, he can fire web blasts at his foes and — in a single bound — swing to another location for escape. The game is highly entertaining, with a whole webful of filmic touches. Well worth a look.



REVENGE OF THE 'GATOR

Hal America

Fans of pinball tables mustn't miss this. The three screens of the play area are stacked vertically, flicking from one to the next. The control method suits the Game Boy's buttons — simple. Whirl and zip through lanes, and bounce off bumpers. A slot machine spins merrily when you slip through the Loop Lane, and there's a chance of activating a 'drop guard' which keeps the ball in play on the upper half. Dropping to the bottom level lets you pop animated 'gators hanging around the side, and also shoot the ball into one of the mouths of three obnoxious little guys. If you score the right guy, you go to one of the three special bonus screens (the others move you back to the top or place the ball in the shooting gutter again). Great fun here.





NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

Heiankyo Aliens (Meldac) has the makings of a good thinkers' game. It's a port over from the NES, and is a maze game played on a fixed screen. Manoeuvering the hero through the checkerboard roads of Heiankyo enables you to create pitfalls to bury the aliens in. Simple to learn, easy to understand, and maddeningly difficult to master.

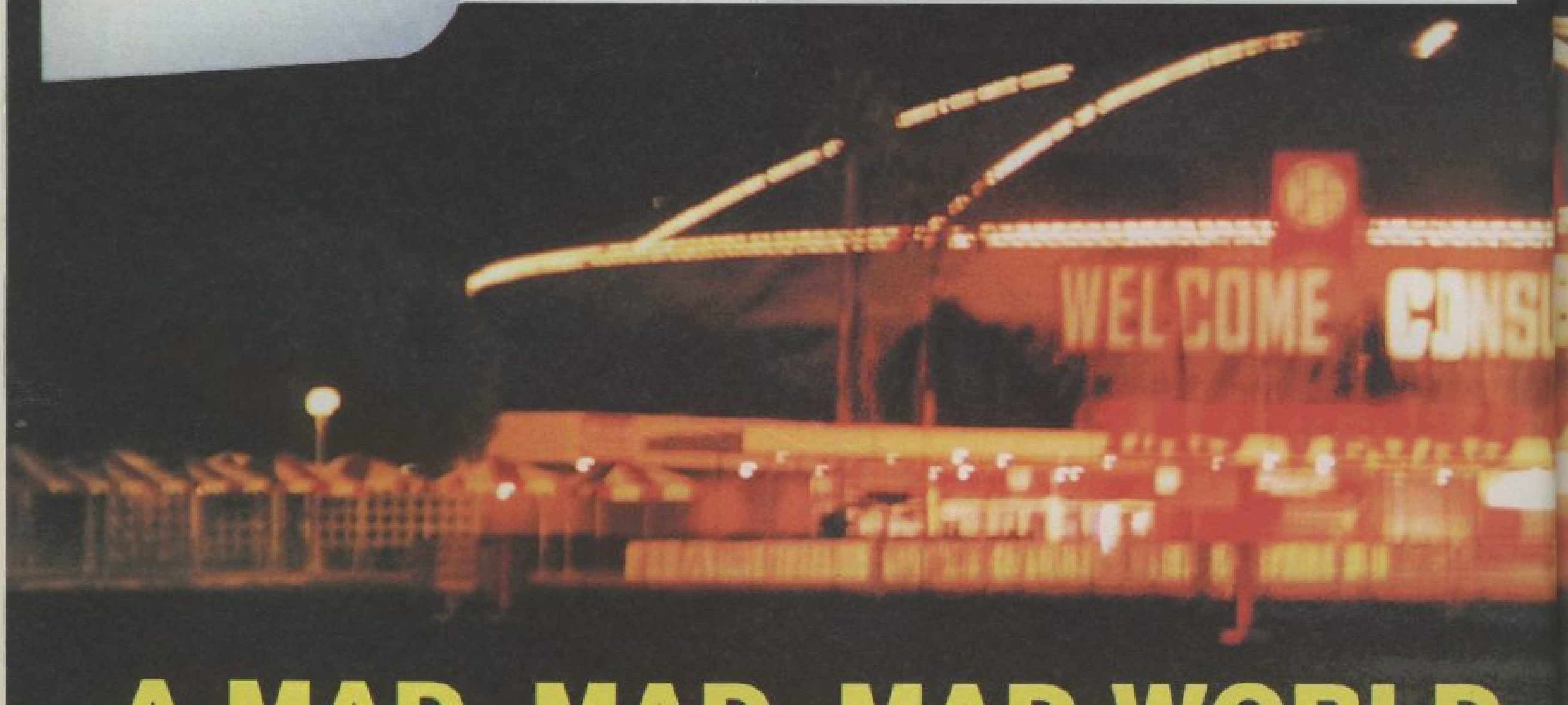
Speaking of checkerboards, Milton Bradley are about to bring out Scrabble. Faithful to the boardgame, the built-in word dictionary contains over 30,000 entries.

Continuing the strain of NES offspring, Acclaim have announced the release of their enormously popular Wizards and Warriors (reviewed on the NES this issue) for the Game Boy under the title Wizards and Warriors X: Fortress of Fear.

Also ported from the NES is Culture Brain's Kung-Fu Kid. Plenty of characters roaming through the 32 villages to bash or dodge. There's also some interesting items to pick up, like the shoes that let you walk on water.

What about shoot-'em-ups? How about the granddaddy of them all: Space Invaders (Taito). They've been out of action for a long time, but here comes the return of those militant, bad-tempered aliens. They drop from saucers overhead, march from left to right, they speed up, they try to blow up your cannon while you duck behind bunkers and cuss... It's even more of a challenge this time because everything's so small.

The biggest question continues to be WHEN? (Everyone's still dying to see Sunsoft's Batman.) Many companies promise by April, but most admit that Game Boy-mania won't really take off till next spring. Fortunately, those already on the shelves are quite good: like FCI's Boxxle and Nintendo's Super Mario Land. Some soon to appear you may have already seen, like Activision's Malibu Beach Volley (based on the Ocean game). It may be hard to wait, but with so many companies working to bring us their best, there's little doubt that Game Boy is going to be the big guy on the block...



A MAD, MAD, MAD WORLD

Every CES you get your normal clan of big boys; the likes of Casio, Sharp, Sony etc. Granted, they always have something interesting to show. But where the real fun's had slithering through the crowds to the large hotchpotch of smaller companies skirting the edges of the hall.

First to catch the eye is The Spy Shop. Here you can find that special something for the granddad who thinks he has everything. The Spy Shop contains a variety of surveillance devices, with my personal favourite being the wrist-watch camera.

Behind the cheap-looking, full-function, quartz LCD timepiece, there's a focusing lens and camera mechanism within a 10mm thick shell. The camera is activated by a small switch on the side of the face, is extremely quiet, and can record seven black and white pictures on the special circular disk. The system comes in a case complete with its own developing kit.

THE BIG BOYS

Casio's Boss series of electronic notepad/information centres have been very popular due to their small size and typewriter keyboard. The SF8000 also uses a raised tactile keyboard as opposed to the flat style of the others.

There's plenty of memory to drive the calendar, telephone directory, diary, calculator and international time display. All three feature a wide 32-column by six-line dot-matrix screen. Boss also has the option of downloading information to your PC through a special cable, with another enabling data to be passed between units.

The new SF9000 Executive model takes the Sharp IQ and Psion Organiser head-on. The flagship allows extra memory cards (to 128K) and uses new utilities (like dictionaries).

We've all seen the above, plus laptops (Cambridge Computing's Z88) and palmtops (Atari's Portfolio), but price and useability never seem to meet. Will we every get the perfect portable companion? It seems Psion may have the answer to our prayers with their new range of Mobile Computers.

There are three units, all 16-bit, featuring new technology in viewing and information storage. All use special information packs which replace mechanical disk drives. The result is unbelievable lightness. They weigh less than five pounds, are no bigger than an A4 magazine page, and run on a rechargeable battery pack that lasts over 60 hours.

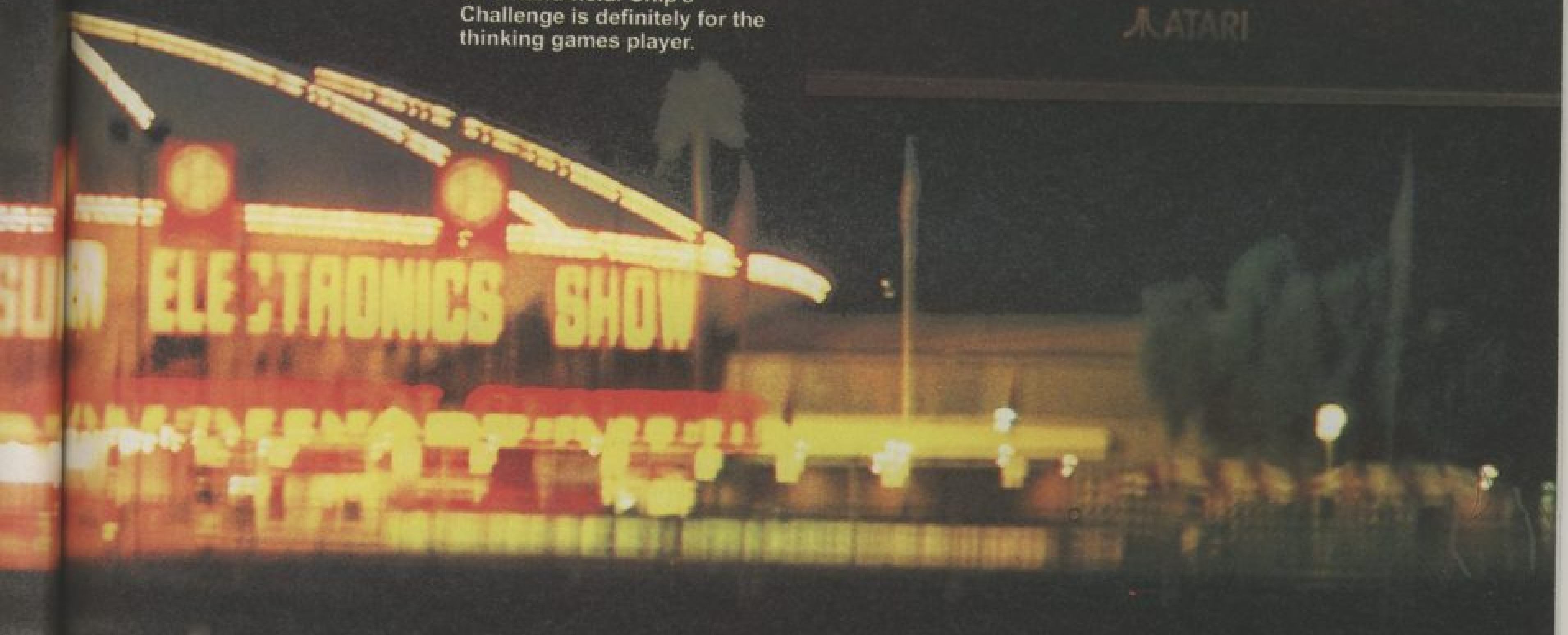
2 NEW LYNX

The action isn't always confined to the CES arena — oh, no! Marshal took a trip over to a nearby hotel and discovered two brand new games for Atari's Lynx.

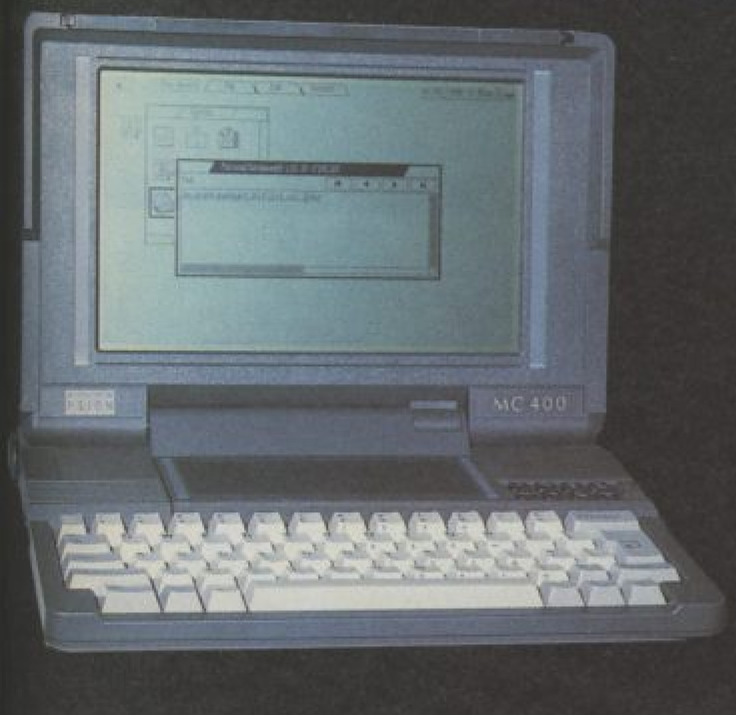
Gauntlet 3 plays exactly as the previous versions — with the sprites of ghosts and other scary creatures moving briskly along — and features the terrific animation and colour that has become synonymous in the hand-held market with the Lynx. However, due to the unique design of the third in the series, you'll have to turn your Lynx (what do you mean you haven't got one yet?) 90-degrees to play it.

Chip's Challenge is a bit more involving and stimulating. Here you have scrolling maze-like screens blocked by locks and barriers. The little Chip character (seen from an overhead view) scurries about, picking up keys and special tokens. There's so much detail on all screen objects that the game creates a texture yet to be equalled on a hand-held. Chip's Challenge is definitely for the thinking games player.





The MC200 (128K) and MC400 (256K) both have a special mouse 'pad' — basically a surface area which responds to touch and drives an arrow around the screen. While the MC200 displays blue/white images, the MC400 uses film retardation for a high-density black and white display. Both use icons and can multitask between applications. There are even options for speech and a facsimile. Built-in programs include a diary, database, word processor and telecommunications.



Those desiring IBM compatibility should go for the MC600. The mouse pad is replaced with keystrokes, and the graphical interface is removed in favour of the MS-DOS command line system. The black and white screen now emulates the PC's four-colour CGA mode.

SIMON SAYS

Simon, as you remember, is the sight and sound game introduced ten years ago. You watched/listened to an audio/visual pattern from its surface and then duplicated it. Here With Design in Mind's version initially looks radically different, being that it's a series of rods poking out from a black module; like a spiny pyramid. You must grab the correct rod in sequence and, depending on the type of game, rotate the console as well.

Another device is the Sound Changer. You hold the microphone to your mouth, speak, and out comes one of 16 programmed voices — from the robot of Battlestar Galactica to Mickey Mouse. Another version includes a cassette player, for mixing music with your new vocal chords.

All in all quite a strange menagerie of matt-black boxes at the first CES this decade. And here's hoping that most of them are released in quantity and available on the shores of the UK soon... *very* soon.

SOFTWARE CITY, USA!

You don't go to America's Consumer Electronics Show to look for anything in particular. You just go to look at everything. After fiddling with all the knobs and buttons, though, it's best to have a sit down before you embark on the second round of gazing. This time, not at the computers' aesthetics, but what the machines are actually being used for. Marshal M Rosenthal plays the day away...

The Consumer Electronics Show is split into two parts. At one end of the show, the North Hall, you get the hardware innovations. While branching off from it, in the West Hall, you get the beeps and buzzes the TGM readers have become more accustomed to. Occasionally, you even get to see the odd suited person trying their luck on the latest eye-catcher. These sorts of people hardly hog the machines, though (one look from a 'games freak' and they'll disappear back to the matte black area, covered in a red shade of embarrassment), so there's no problems having a bash yourself.

Entering the West Hall feels like gate-crashing a party. The best party hosts usually turn out to be Nintendo, but they've got some stiff opposition this year, not least from NEC and Sega, both of whom are displaying their latest US console releases.

Shaped like a maze, filled with monitors and guides, Sega are previewing some very hot pancakes being flipped on the 16-bit Mega Drive (Genesis over here) grill.

Besides an game based on Walt Disney's Fantasia, new titles are in production for this year's summer movies. The most predominant being the film already heralded as this year's Batman, Warren Beatty and Madonna in Dick Tracey. The game promises to have plenty of gangster action, with the all-American square-jawed cop coming out as the hero (most of the time). The game also features favourite characters like Prune Face and Faceless, and that good old wrist radio.

Also coinciding with its big film release this year is Spider-Man. The story of schoolboy Peter Parker and his fight against crime on the streets (and skyscrapers) of New York City.

Perhaps Sega's greatest coup, though, is Michael Jackson: The Video Game. Based partly on his Moonwalker and Smooth Criminal videos, the program was constructed with the active participation of the superstar. Fluid animation enables you to move Michael around, snapping his hat to the rhythm — while saving the children of the world. A coin-op version for the arcades is already being programmed.

IT'S JUST AN ILLUSION

Microillusions continue their devotion to the Amiga with a new desktop video product, Time Code Reader/Generator. This allows the Amiga to produce synchronized graphics, sound and MIDI events. Fully compatible with Music X and other Microillusions products, the





New World Computing has the humorous, and bloody, Nuclear War. Pick four of the world's leaders and puts them through their paces in this strategy/action game. Build weapons, broadcast propaganda, but most of all: NUKE YOUR NEIGHBOURS! Humorous content (sometimes there are flying headless cows to deal with) combined with cartoon animation and a slightly off-the-wall point of view make Nuclear War more fun than a slightly lethal dose of x-rays.



Generator works with the professional coding systems necessary to make valid and professional taping possible — which means SMPTE and EBU time codes in various modes. Onscreen software simulates all the functions of standard video hardware, plus reader/generator information displays.

Nearby is the small Mediagenic booth, and under one of their wings, Infocom. They're showing Circuit's Edge, a roleplaying game based on George Effinger's sci-fi book. Edge is roleplaying in the future, based on people being able to moddy (modify) themselves through the use of small ROM/RAM cards. As you move around in this futuristic and hostile world, one window shows all the action, while another reflects yourself and the people you meet. The adventure operates in a WIMP environment.

Dynamix's Jerry Luttrell (we reviewed their A-10 and David Wolfe games last month) reveals little about future projects, although he does say that they've two programs in development: a Red Baron World War I flight simulator program and another action/interactive adventure along the lines of David Wolfe: Secret Agent, but totally icon driven.

Cinemaware are showing It Came From The Desert 2: Ant Heads. Basically it's an add-on module to the original, and continues the battle against the dreaded ants in the future. Also on hand is TV Sports Basketball and Wings — an interactive adventure set during World War I.

STRAT ATTACK!

Just on from them, SSI are showing Champions of Krynn, an AD&D fantasy roleplaying game set in the Dragonlance world. Guide a party of characters through combat and court intrigue, to ultimately thwart the plot of the evil dark queen. Characters include those found in the Pool of Radiance and Curse of the Azure Bonds, plus new monsters and mysteries.

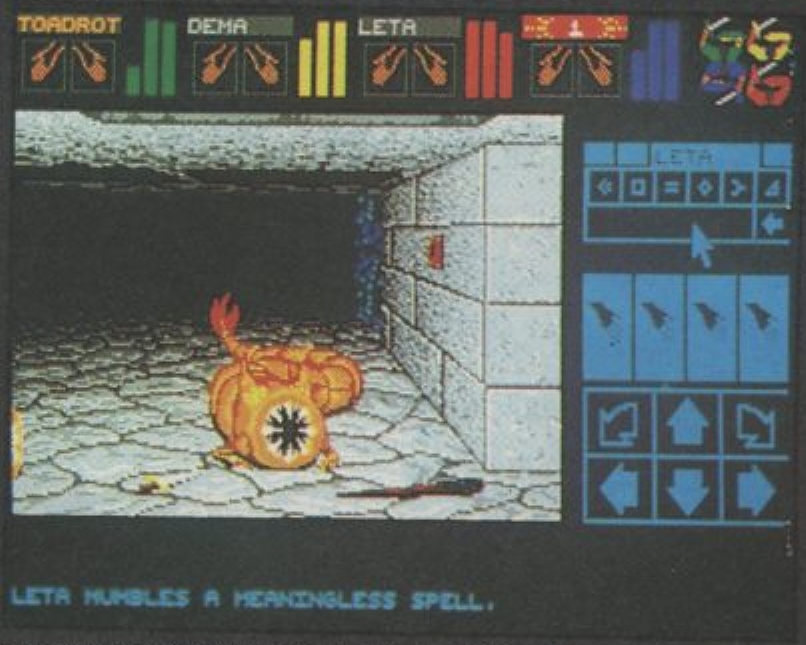
Or try Dragonstrike, the first dragon flight and combat simulator. View the skies from the back of a heroic dragon, just like flying a normal plane. The evil queen Takhisis will throw the full weight of her evil dragons up against you, so take stock of the weapons at hand (which include armour, healing ointments, and shields). Dragons possess their own combat powers — they've flaming breath as well as claws and teeth.

Moving back within a cold, steel shell brings us to Renegade Legion Interceptor. Jointly developed with FASA, makers of action board games, SSI's Interceptor gives you the opportunity to command a fighter squadron, guiding the pilot characters through many combat scenarios. Each adventure builds upon that which came before, so acquiring knowledge and skills is vital. There are over 20 fighter and ship types, a powerful artificial intelligence system and more than ten missions.

Electronic Arts are also beginning to put out more products. Skate or Die was fine in its day, but now's the time for Ski or Die. It's an all-animated action game which has you, amongst other crazy things, tossing snowballs and skiing down slopes while avoiding bizarre guys carrying chainsaws.

Caeser gives you the chance to take over Rome. Designed by the same people who created Defender of the Crown, there are action-oriented chariot races to participate in, as well as the usual intrigue and politics. Of course, there's lots of time to spend in the field with the troops — taking on opponents and conquering new territories.

Accolade's new Gunboat: River Combat Simulation seems a real winner. Take to the treacherous inlets of Vietnam, Colombia, Panama in a less-than sophisticated ship designed to hit 35 knots in 18 inches of water. It takes time to get used to firing while bouncing up and down, but the training mode will help you get a handle on the controls. Then it's off on any of 20 missions, switching between the four positions on the boat: Commander/Driver, Gunner's Mate, Gunner Station B and C. All designed with a unique 'fish eye' lens perspective.



■ Chaos Strike Back, otherwise known as Dungeon Master II. FTL's magical sequel to the blockbusting FRP game, doing great guns in the states and in the UK too!

It's getting around lunchtime and I'm getting peckish. But before I can get going to the next press conference an unsavoury character just off the side of the hall's entrance beckons me over. He opens his raincoat to reveal FTL's Chaos Strikes Back. Continuing the battle begun in Dungeon Master, Chaos brings you back within the confines of damp walls filled with dripping ichor. The new game also contains incomprehensible enemies, combined with digitised sounds, animation, mind-wrenching puzzles to solve and treasures to find.

A DECADE OF SIERRA

Sierra are busy celebrating their tenth anniversary. New games include The Colonel's Bequest and Codename: Iceman. While Conquests of Camelot is imminent and takes you off in search of the Holy Grail. All the trappings of the mythical Celtic legend are portrayed, and there's even simulated combat scenes.

Sorcerian is an exciting roleplaying game imported from Japan. 15 separate adventures are contained within this universe; battle the Medusa, search for the lost Talisman and more.

It's been documented that nearly 2.5 million fantasy-oriented games were sold last year in the States, some one million people getting deeply involved in roleplaying.

Is this simple fact a sign of things to come for UK games players. Who knows? Only the British importers and buyers can tell. Let's hope everything's given a chance in Britain, though.

LCD HAVEN

Moving from a high-end use to the bargain basement brings us to another application for LCDs. Now, contrary to what you might think, hand-held LCD games aren't dying a quick death. In fact, they seem to be doing better now than ever. (Perhaps because the machines are so disposably cheap now.) Konami's Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles is here on LCD, giving slash and hack fans a chance to try their luck in the murky underground sewers.

Speaking of which, TMNT will soon be available for home computers (Hewson have been trying to get the licence), as well as a number of other titles taken from Nintendo carts — including Castlevania and Blades of Steel. Other titles on black and white LCD, and direct from their arcade big brothers, include Double Dribble (basketball), Commando and Gradius (a Xenon-type game). But my personal favourite is Skate Or Die, the mad game of mayhem previously released on computer from Electronic Arts over two years ago. This movement to produce games for more than just the game consoles signals a positive sign towards computer longevity in the States.

Not to be outdone, Acclaim (who release Rare's game designs, and have Nintendo Wizards and Warriors reviewed this month), are releasing NARC (straight from the arcade), Bigfoot (driving a monster truck over obstacles), Ring King, Combat Zone and Iron Sword.

DEEP INTO SPACE ACE

Toughest challenge of 1990 ? Maybe... but from the depths of frustration don't despair! TGM gives you the lowdown for high achievement with our Players Guide to the brilliant cartoon hit Space Ace.



SCENE 1
Borf attacks on an anti-gravity platform. Move **right**, **left** and **down** to dodge the laser bolts.

SCENE 2
A floating robot with two stomping legs tries to push Dexter into a small hole. Move **right**, **left** and **left** to avoid it.

SCENE 3
Dexter is chased to his ship by more floating robots. Move the stick **down** and **up**.

SCENE 4
Dexter is flying towards Borf's Space Station. Push **up** to avoid crashing into it.

SCENE 5
Inside the station a muck monster tries to turn Ace into lunch. Press **fire** to kill it.

SCENE 6
Dexter must escape from a large, crunching arm by leaping across a broken bridge to safety. Press **right** and **up** to proceed.

SCENE 7
To cross the moving platform, press0. **right** and **right**.


1

SCENE 8
On a rock path another monster mistakes Dexter for his next meal. Press **down** and **right** to escape its jaws.

SCENE 9
Further along the path, another local inhabitant appears with jaws gaping. **Down** and **left** gets you past him.


3

SCENE 10
This path's getting dangerous. Press **fire** to blow the next monster's head off.

SCENE 11
Dexter is dropped onto a stone bridge before two caves. Press **up** to escape the two cat people that come up behind you.

SCENE 12
In the maze of corridors that make up Borf's lair, Dexter is attacked by two security dogs. Press **up** to avoid them.


4

SCENE 13
The dogs are still hot on your tail, so press **right** to run up the intersection.

SCENE 14
Energy conduits run along this corridor. Jump **up** to avoid the dogs and a frazzling end.

SCENE 15
Ace stands between two security robots. Run **right** to avoid stereo laser bolts.

SCENE 16
Another corridor filled with energy conduits. Hang a serious **left** to stay alive.

SCENE 17
A huge laser cannon stands in front of Dexter. Dodge **left** to avoid a stomach-crunching laser bolt.

SCENE 18
Borf's stronghold is almost in sight. Run **right** to avoid another laser blast.

SCENE 19
Don't just stand there, push **up** to climb that ladder.

SCENE 20
Ace now faces an enraged Borf. Press **fire** and **right** to avoid Borf's flaming staff.

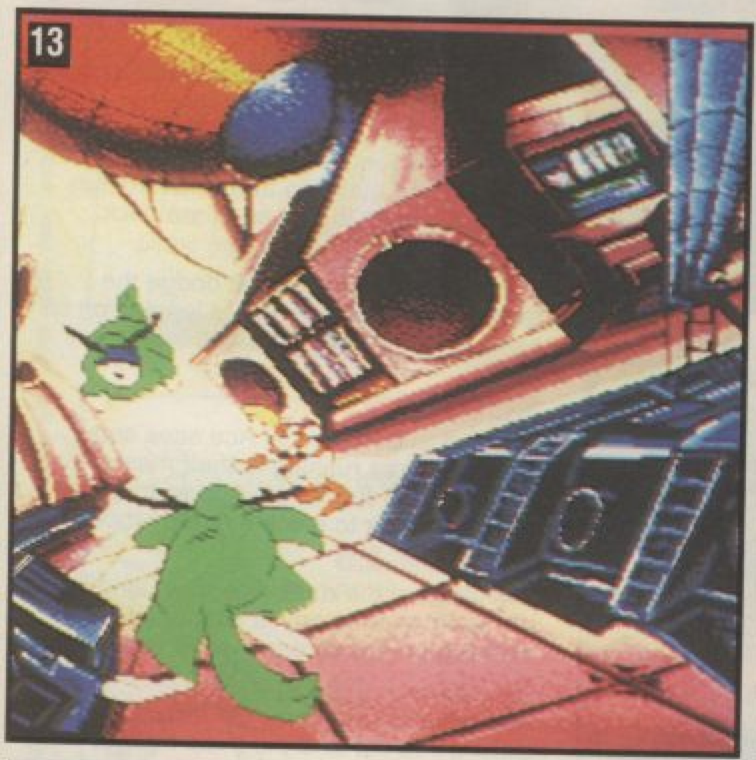
SCENE 21
Fire and **right** saves Ace yet again.

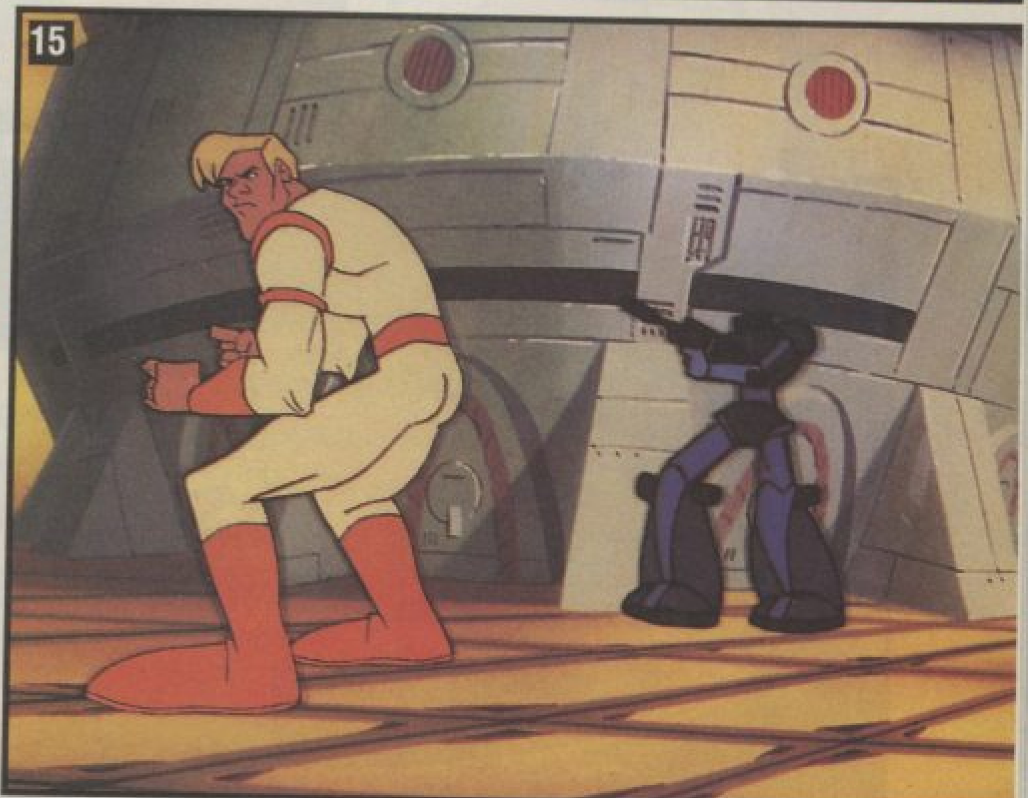
SCENE 22
Borf swings his staff down towards Ace's head. **Fire** and **right** avoids being knocked out.

SCENE 23
Ace goes on the offensive, but Borf counters with a round-house kick. **Fire** and **down** avoids instant death.

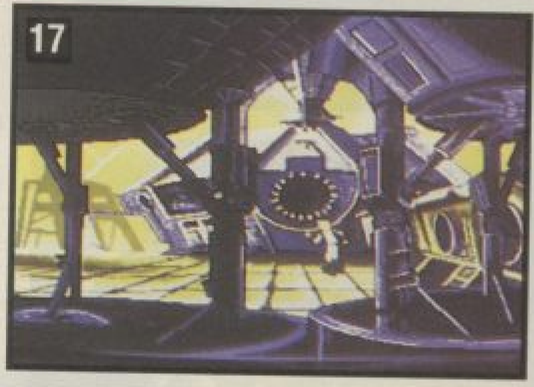
SCENE 24
Ace ends up flat on his back, Borf brings down his staff to finish off our hero. Press **fire** to deflect it.













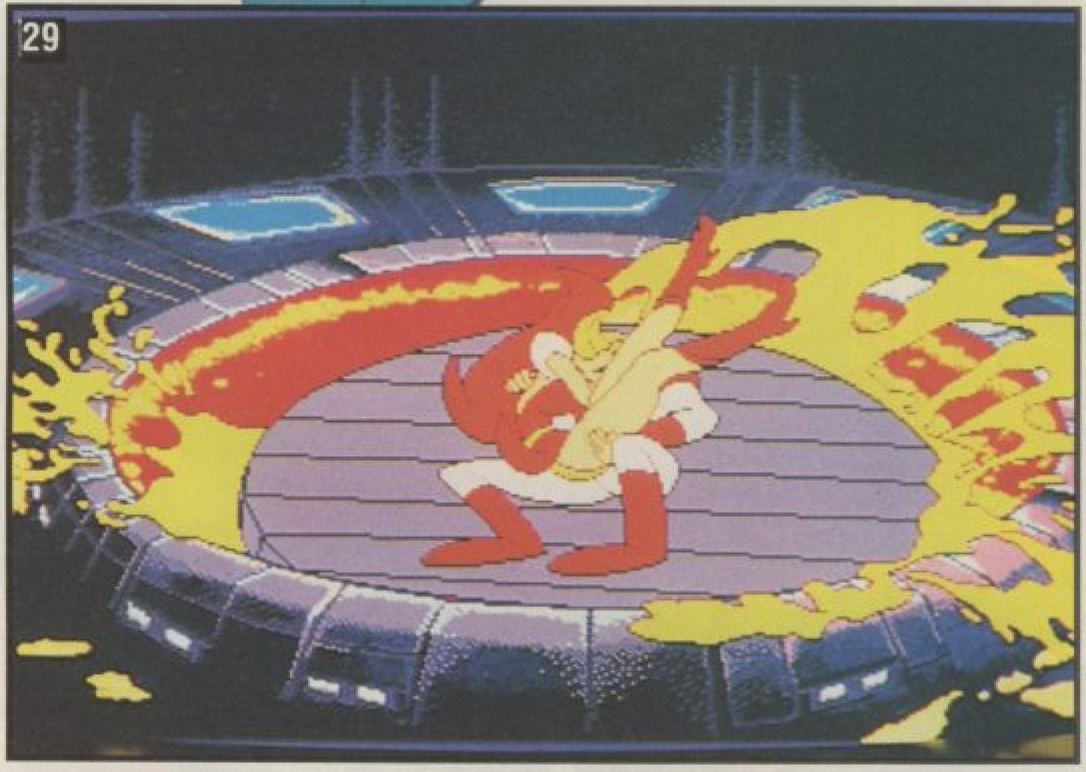


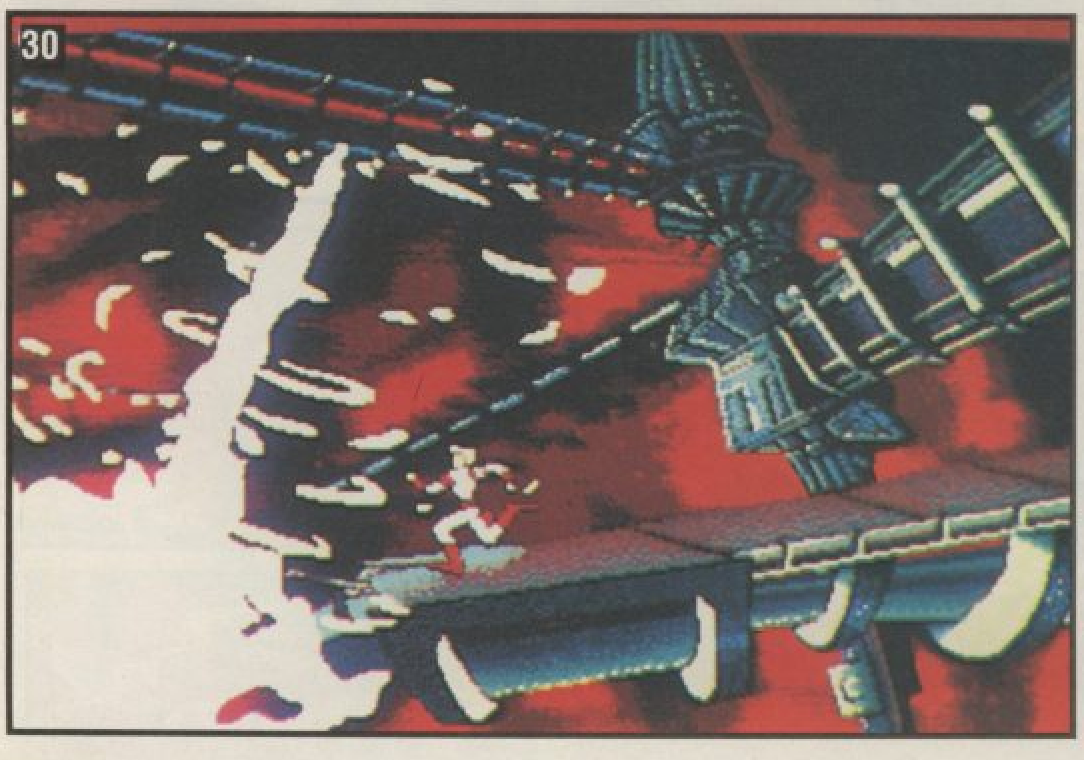












SCENE 25
Back on his feet, Ace must yet again dodge Borf's staff. **Up** and **down** makes you first leap in the air and then duck.

SCENE 26
For the last time Ace must dodge the Commander's attack before leaping on his back. **Right** and **down** to mount the evil Borf.

SCENE 27
Clinging to Borf's back, Ace sees small blue creatures rushing to their master's aid. Pressing **fire** sends Ace soaring through the air to catch a nearby rope.

SCENE 28
Swinging on the rope, Ace must land on the platform Kimberly is strapped to. **Do nothing** on this screen _ save your energy.

SCENE 29
Ace releases Kimberly, but the platform is sinking into the lava pit. Leap **right** to escape.

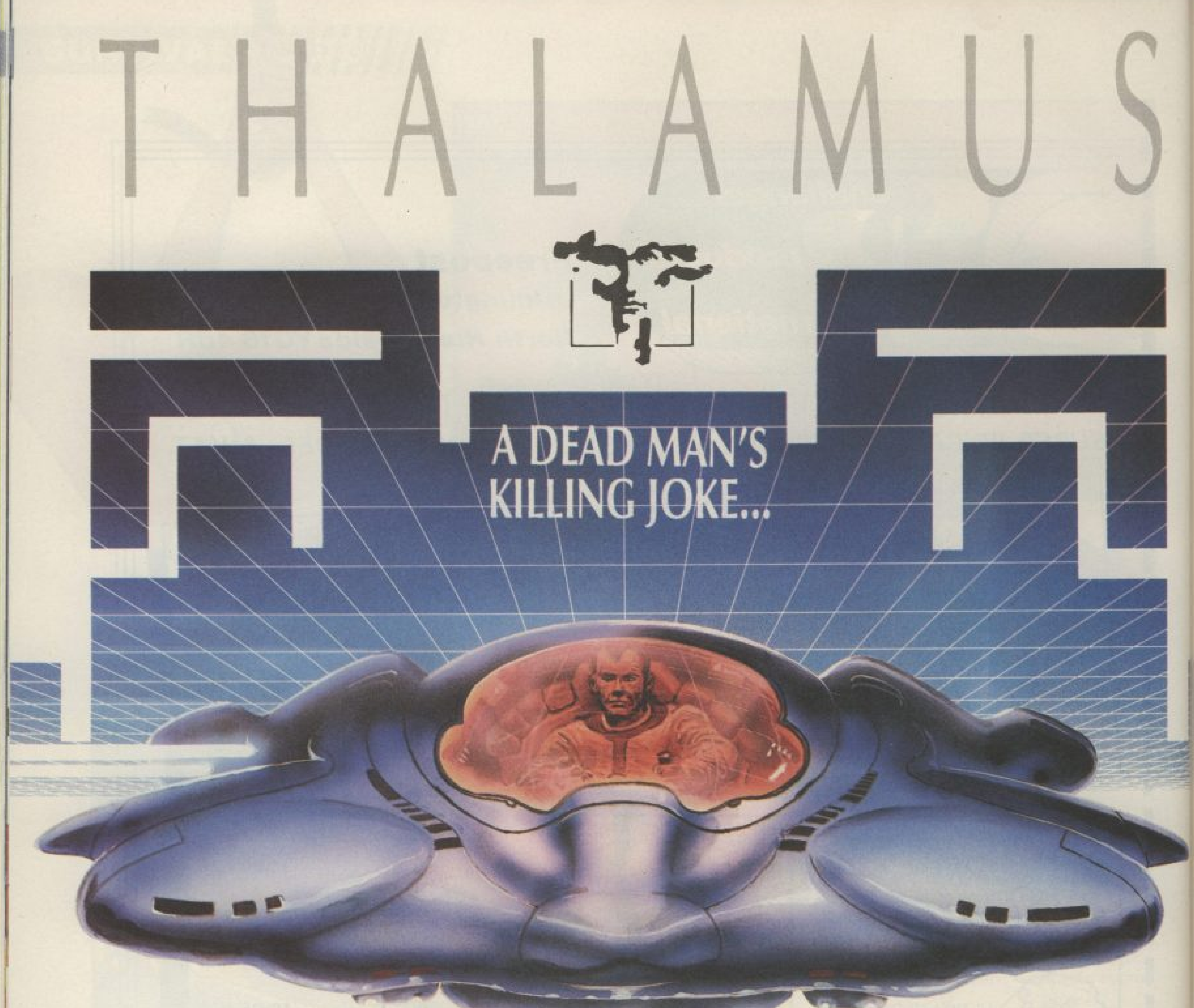
SCENE 30
With Kimberly safe, Ace must dodge Borf's Infanto Ray. Jump **right** to avoid the deadly pulses.

SCENE 31
Dexter must now sprint **left** along the platform.

SCENE 32
Ace comes across a bridge filled with mirrors. Initially confusing, so press **right** to avoid another blast from the ray.

SCENE 33
Ace has an idea. Push one of the mirrors in front of the ray to deflect the perilous Infanto Ray back at Commander Borf. Press **left** and **right** to do this.

And there you have it: Borf is hit by the Infanto Ray, justly turned into a child, Earth's saved and Ace is a hero. Thanks to all our reader help and, of course, Empire.


THALAMUS
A DEAD MAN'S
KILLING JOKE...
SNARE
By Rob Stevens





TGM TRICKS 'N' CHEATS

New logos, more tips, less waffle. All in all, there's no doubting which is the most comprehensive tips section around — TGM Tricks 'n' Cheats, of course. No matter how small the tip, if it helps you, then we'll print it! All that and prizes too...

Adventure Island
Nintendo

Can't say that I've played this one but Snardy Cadette from Walthamstow has. Here are his hints on how to beat those obstructive animals.

The Snail
Generally harmless. Basically it just gets in your way. To get rid of one shoot it.

The Cobra
Only dangerous when you have some shooting power. In which case it will spit lethal venom at you. Despatch it with either the axe or a fireball shot.

Pink Little Piggy
If he gets in your way shoot him.

Blue/Red Octopus
The red octopus bounces around on the water's surface making it hard to jump over. However, it can easily be killed with just one shot. The blue octopus is more of the same but needs shooting twice.

The Frog
There are two varieties of frogs; green and brown. The brown is the most dangerous. When it appears onscreen it will start to jump towards you. When it gets close enough, shoot it twice to kill it. If you don't have any shooting power you'll have to time your movements carefully to avoid being jumped upon.

The Whale
The secret to avoiding contact with these dangerous creatures is to time your jumps carefully. The whale continually jumps out of the water. Watch how it jumps. When it gets to the peak of its jump make your move and jump high over it.

The Coyote
Watch out for red flowers on the ground. When one passes off screen the coyote will make its entrance. It takes two shots to kill him but you have to be quick.

Switchblade
ST

Here's a quick cheat from Adam Coombs of Chardstock.

Get onto the high score table and type POOKY. Now hold down the key corresponding to the level you wish to advance to (1-5). While keeping the key pressed down, click on end to exit from the high score table. Then start the game as normal.

Batman (The Movie)
Spectrum

Steve Haw, Smethwick.
You'll need a Multiface to use these pokes. Enter POKE 24372,0 for infinite time or POKE 24336, 201; POKE 24881, 201 and POKE 24973, 52 for infinite time and energy.

Rampage
Sega

Gerald Silwern from Stokenewington reveals how to find a secret continue game option.

When you have lost all your lives, and the Game Over message has appeared, push down both fire buttons on the joypad and hey presto! the game restarts from the level the game finished on.

Turbo Out Run
C64

Tips on US Gold's latest hit from Edward Bullock in Solihull.

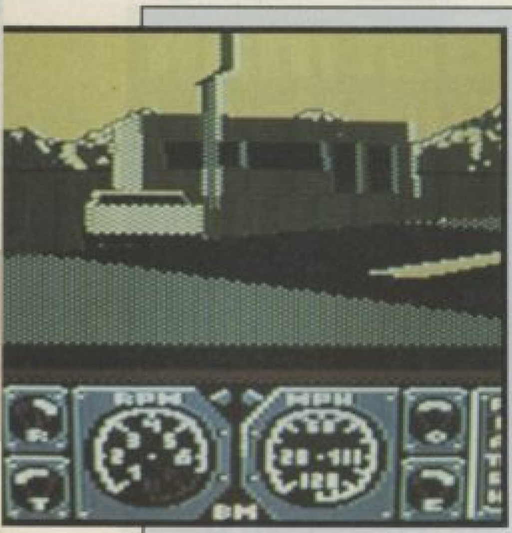
1) WORKSHOP
On your first visit to the workshop buy the high grip tyres then on the next visit equip yourself with the hi power engine. Finally, on your last visit get the special turbo.

2) LEVEL TIPS
Level 1 — New York
An easy stage that is ideal for getting used to the turbo.
Level 2 — Washington DC
Beware of the trees! The other main problem is overtaking the police cars. Accelerate up behind them, pull out either left or right then nudge them in the opposite direction.
Level 3 — Pittsburgh
Be wary of the sharp corners. When you're stuck in a storm use your brakes and gears carefully.
Level 4 — Indianapolis
Another fairly easy level; lots of chances to use your turbo.
Level 5 — Chicago
Night driving shouldn't pose any problems but watch out for the bumps and the sharp bends in the road.
Level 6 — St Louis
Use the nudge tactics on the police cars.
Level 7 — Memphis
A nasty level, mind the rocks!
Level 8 — Atlanta
Hardly any obstacles other than sandrifts so there's plenty of opportunities to use your turbo.
Level 9 — Miami
Tight bends are few and far between on this level so let rip with your turbo.
Level 10 — New Orleans
The tight bends reappear on this level. Use your gears and brakes carefully.
Level 11 — San Antonio
A seriously bad level. Keep an eye out for obstacles and use your turbo carefully.
Level 12 — Dallas
Some of the corners are unmarked so don't go overboard on the turbo.
Level 13 — Oklahoma City
Your actions have to be fast on this level, there are some extremely sharp corners.
Level 14 — Denver
Probably the worst level in the game. Take things easy. Don't go all out but keep an eye on the time limit.
Level 15 — Grand Canyon
Fairly easy.
Level 16 — Los Angeles
Very easy to complete considering it's the last level.



RoboCop
MSX

Javier Gonzalez, Santurce, Spain.
Shoot all the windows, then shoot the girl on the second level and you will receive infinite ammunition.



Hard Drivin'
Amiga

If you're having problems qualifying for the big race then stop right there — use this cheat from Julian Robbins of Stafford.

1) At the start of the game drive extremely slowly and make a 180 degree turn.

2) Now follow the road under the bridge and at the fork junction take the road on the right.

3) Just before the checkpoint slow down. Now go through it and make another 180 degree turn.

4) Carry on back through the checkpoint.

5) Let the time run out so that you qualify for the Championship Lap.

Strider
Amiga

Despite the attractive graphics I never really got into this game. Regardless, it a very popular version of Capcom's coin-op. JL McArthur of Mortlake has found a cheat.

Start the game and press F9 to pause the game. Now hold down the HELP, left shift and 1 keys together. The cheat mode is now activated. Unpause the game. Press number 1-5 to select different levels and F1-F4 for the different stages within each level.

Beach Volley
Amiga

Stephen Bascombe from Cornwall discovered that if you type DADDYBRACEY while you're playing the game you can skip levels by pressing F1.

Galaga '88
PC Engine

A classic shoot-'em-up. It's not graphically stunning but it's just so playable; a must for all PC Engine owners. Mark Stannard from Northampton offers some advice on how to boost your score.

On the bonus screens (the galactic dancing rounds) don't move your ship or fire at any of the aliens, you will receive a secret bonus.

New Zealand Story
Spectrum

Yet another cheat for Ocean's great arcade conversion. When on the title screen type in PHILLIP. This gives Kiwi and Tiki improved firepower. While typing in the same thing while playing the game transports you to the next level. Thanks to Matthew Kennedy of High Wycombe for that one.

Treasure Island Dizzy
Amiga/ST

If you're having problems with Code Masters' great game fret no longer. Ian Whittaker from Buxton knows exactly where you've got to use all those objects.

Chest — below the cliff.
Snorkel — in the water.
Gravedigger spade — at the grave on island two.
Magic stone — at the totem pole on island two.
Detonator and dynamite — in the mine on island one.
Axe and bible — at the bridge on island one.
Sack of gold coins — in the shop.
Fire-proof suit — in the smugglers' cave on island two.
Brandy — in the shop.
Gold egg — in the shop.
Brass key — in the smugglers' cave.
Crow bar — on the rock in the water.

Stormlord
Amiga

Shaun Easton, Plymouth.
When the credits screen is displayed type in **DRAGONBRIDGE**. A message indicating that the cheat mode has been activated then appear. Start the game as usual, press the space bar then press L to advance levels.

Battle Squadron
Amiga

Andrew Nutbeen, Romsey.
1) Attack the inner cores in the following order: two, three, one.

2) The green weapon is ideal for player one.

3) Player two should equip himself with the blue and yellow weapon.

4) The game is easier in one-player mode.

5) Set the maximum time delay on the enemy shots.

6) Have only eight shots on screen.

7) Start with blue.

Stunt Car Racer
All formats

Racing games seem to be all the rage at the moment with Power Drift, Turbo Out Run, Hard Drivin' and the forerunner to them all, MicroProse's Stunt Car Racer. But this remains one of my favourites just for the sheer hell you can give the other drivers without ending up in flames every two seconds. Thanks go to Jason Binder from Chippenham for this set of tips.

GENERAL TIPS
Before racing it's a good idea to practise first. That way you can get a good feel for the courses. In the lower divisions you can

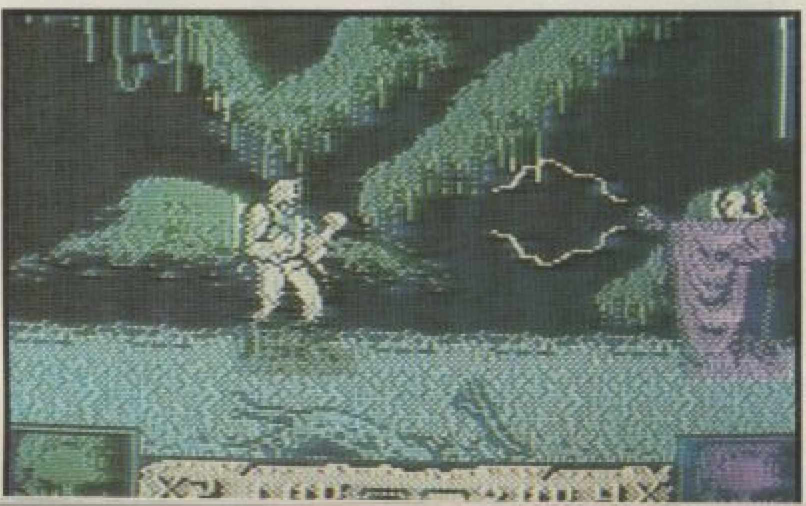
Mickey Mouse
Nintendo Game Boy

At last, some tips for the Game Boy. Gareth Trotter from Edgware has mastered Mickey Mouse and here are the codes for all 80 levels.

2) SZWS	19) Z22Z	35) TS2W	51) T22X	67) Z322
3) ZS2S	20) ZTPZ	36) TZPW	52) TTPX	68) Z1P2
4) ZZPS	21) SP3Z	37) 2W3W	53) 2P3X	69) SE32
5) SW3S	22) SYEZ	38) 2XEW	54) ZYEX	70) SHE2
6) SXES	23) ZP4Z	39) TW4W	55) TP4X	71) ZE42
7) ZW4S	24) ZY9Z	40) TX9W	56) TY9X	72) ZH92
8) ZX9S	25) WZRZ	41) PSRW	57) P2RX	73) W3R2
10) WZFS	26) WTFZ	42) PZFW	58) PTFX	74) W1F2
11) XSJS	27) X2JZ	43) YSJW	59) Y2JX	75) X3J2
12) XZKS	28) XTKZ	44) YZKW	60) YTKX	76) X1K2
13) WWMS	29) WPMZ	45) PWMW	61) PPMX	77) WEM2
14) WXCS	30) WXCZ	46) PXCW	62) PYCX	78) WHX2
15) XWAS	31) XPAZ	47) YWAW	63) YPAX	79) XEA2
16) XXOS	32) XYOZ	48) YXOW	64) YYOX	80) XH02.
17) S2SZ	33) 2SSW	49) 22SX	65) S3S2	
18) STWZ	34) 2ZWW	50) 2TWX	66) S1W2	

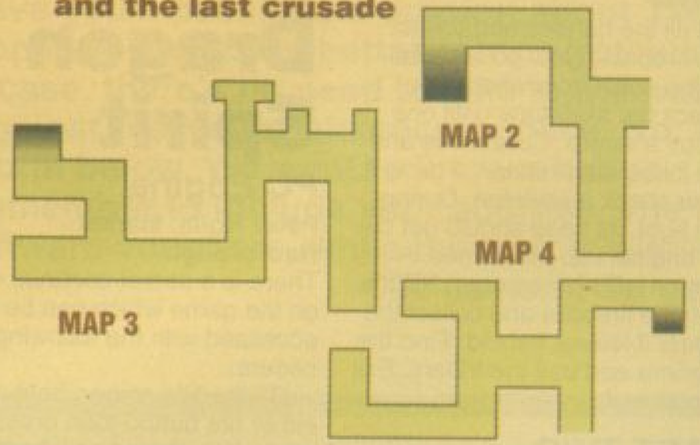
Altered Beast
Spectrum

Steve Haw from Smethwick wrote in to say, while playing the game press all the keys on the keyboard to progress to the next level.



INDIANA JONES

and the last crusade



All formats

The second of three installments of Indy tips. Thanks go to Raoul Van Haver from Antwerp and Christopher Nicoll from Tonbridge for the maps.

THE CASTLE OF BRUNWALD

Enter the castle and knock out the butler. Go north and search the room until you find a drunk German soldier. Talk nicely to him and you will be rewarded with information about the castle. Offer to get him another drink and he will give you his stein (cup). Now go to the room with the burning fire and the keg of beer. Use the stein with the spigot, use the stein with the hot coals, then use the stein with the spigot again. When the steam from the fire has gone pick up the roast boar and leave. Go back to the entrance to the castle.

MAP 2

Give the stein to guard one. Go through the door one and pick up the servant's uniform then leave. Nearby is a room with a fireplace. Push the first statue and a secret passage will be revealed. Close it again (you'll find it useful later in the game). Leave the room. Say to guard two: 'Hi, I'm selling fine leather jackets'; 'I've got authorization'; '15 Marks, just the thing for a guard.' Go up the stairs.

MAP 3

Go through door one. Open and examine the chest. Use the servant's uniform then leave the room. Give the painting that you took from Henry's house to guard three. You will see a sequence about a pass card and a combination. Remember where the form is kept. Go through door two, open the chest and look inside. Examine the uniform, you should now have a key. Change back into Indywear and leave the room. Go back downstairs and return to the place where you found the servant's uniform. Use the brass key in the clothes lock and pick up the grey uniform. Leave the room. Go back up the stairs, change into the grey uniform then enter room one. Beat up guard four, go through door three and use the first aid kit. Leave room and go up the stairs.

MAP 4

Say to guard one: 'Soldier, your pants are wrinkled'; 'And no time to remove the stain on your jacket'; 'Sauce. You buffoon! Stand aside!' Go through door one. Give the roast boar to the dog and take the trophy. Remember the animation sequence where the pass was hidden? Get the pass. Now go back to the kitchen where you originally found the boar but remember to change into Indywear before going down stairs. Fill the trophy with beer from the keg. Go back upstairs (remember to change into the grey uniform) and give the trophy to Bif. When he hits himself with the trophy knock him out with a quick punch. Now go and beat up guard two and go through door two. Look through the window and pick up the silver key hanging from the candelabra. Use the silver key in door three. An alarm will sound and General Vogel will come and find you. Hand the Grail Diary over to him. You will then find yourself tied to a chair with Henry. Save the game here.

To free yourself push the chairs so that they line up with the large axe so that when Indy kicks the armour it cuts through the ropes (that's why it is advisable to save the game just in case you don't get it right first time). Once free, push the belly of the statue on the left of the fireplace then leave through the secret passage. Go right and use the motorbike.

On your way to Berlin you will stopped at a checkpoint. Say the following to the guard: 'That is out of the question'; 'The only papers I can find are these Marks.' Give him the money and then say 'Here is 50 Marks'. You will now be allowed through the checkpoint.

When you arrive at Berlin, Elsa will give you the Grail Diary back. You will soon run into Hitler. Give him the pass and he will sign it for you. You now have a valid travel pass. Go to the airport.

There are several ways of completing the next section. If you have enough money you can buy the tickets for the Zeppelin or you can steal the tickets from the man in the blue coat. To do this, get Henry to ask the man about his grandchildren then while the man is telling him use Indy to pick his pockets. If you do get on the Zeppelin there are too many guards to fight so try this instead. Steal the biplane that is outside the terminal. To start it you must push all the switches up; move the dial to B; click on the tank indicator to make it green; pull out the 'T' lever and black knob; push in and pull out the 'T' lever until the arrow on the dial points to green; push in and pull out the black knob three times then push the red starter button.

After you have crashed the plane steal the blue car. Each time that you are stopped at the checkpoint show the guard your travel pass. He will let you through providing it is signed by Hitler. You will now be in Iskenderun but you will have to wait until next issue for the rest of the solution.

The Untouchables

C64

Thanks to Martin and Jonathan Griffin, Haywards Heath.

LEVEL 1 — THE WAREHOUSE

Capone's thugs are colour-coded according to what they drop when shot.

Light blue — no bonus.

Light green — either a red or pink rose is dropped. When collected your health is restored to either 100% or 50%.

Dark green — a white scroll is dropped. When collected your time is increased by one minute.

Grey — a gun case is dropped. When collected your gun is enhanced, though the number of bullets is limited.

White — these are Capone's book-keepers. When shot several times 10% of the evidence is dropped. Hunt these characters down until you have collected all the evidence. You will then go onto level two.

When you start the game try to make sure that the second thug you shoot is dark green. You will find the extra time useful.

Once you have collected over 50% of the evidence the game gets harder. Capone's thugs now need to be shot more than once unless you have the pink gun. Capone's book-keepers will also become harder to shoot as they will be able to run to another part of the warehouse.

Try not to collide into the book-keepers as they will disappear, only to return later, thus wasting valuable time. If you do not collect the evidence as soon as it is dropped, one of the other thugs will pick it up and become a bookkeeper.

LEVEL 2 — THE BRIDGE

To complete this level you must shoot Capone's henchmen until the baseball bat on the status panel is fully depleted — all four of your characters must survive the shoot out. You don't have to collect any items on this level so just keep an eye on your time and your characters' health. You will find this level easier to complete if your joystick has an autofire option.

LEVEL 3 — THE ALLEYS

You have to be quick on the draw to complete this level. You are equipped with a double barrel shotgun and will find yourself continuously reloading. To avoid being shot when reloading always reload in a backstreet by moving the joystick to the far right. To progress to level four all characters must survive. When a character is low on energy, switch to the character with the most energy.

Operation Thunderbolt

Amiga

Mark Lawrence from Basildon supplied this cheat for Ocean's Christmas hit. Follow the instructions in the REM statements and when the game loads you will have infinite lives.

```
10 DIM CODE% (255)
20 FOR N´0 TO 95
30 READ A$: A´VAL ("&H"´A$)
40 CODE% (N)´A
50 NEXT N
60 CHEAT´VARPTR (CODE%(0))
60 CALL CHEAT
70 REM TYPE IN THIS LISTING AND SAVE FOR FUTURE USE
80 REM INSERT OPERATION THUNDERBOLT DISK AND RUN THIS PROGRAM
90 REM GAME SHOULD LOAD AS USUAL WITH INFINITE LIVES
100 DATA 70FF, 2C78, 0004, 4EAE, FEB6, 2200, 5280, 6772
110 DATA 4BFA, 00EE, 3AFC, 0400, 429D, 3AC1, 93C9, 4EAE
120 DATA FEDA, 2AC0, 2A8D, 2B4D, 0008, 589D, 4295, 4BFA
130 DATA 0090, 1ABC, 0005, 3B7C, 0030, 000A, 41ED, 0038
140 DATA 2B48, 0006, 41FA, 0060, 7000, 7200, 43FA, 006A
150 DATA 4EAE, FE44, 4A80, 662A, 700C, 99CC, 6126, 7002
160 DATA 49F9, 0007, 0000, 611C, 397C, 5340, 0030, 297C
170 DATA 343C, 4A69, 0032, 297C, 31C2, 73BA, 0054, 4EEC
180 DATA 000C, 4E75, 43FA, 0032, 3340, 001C, 234C, 0028
190 DATA 42A9, 002C, 237C, 0000, 0400, 0024, 337C, 0030
200 DATA 0012, 4EEE, FE38, 7472, 6163, 6B64, 6973, 6B2E
210 DATA 6465, 7669, 6365, 0000, 0000, 0000, 0000, 0000
```



get away with the occasional crash but don't expect to be a success in the higher divisions unless you're an expert on each track.

Use your turbo boost in even amounts, don't go whacking on full all the time — you'll only end up losing control of the car. Use a bit extra at the start of the race so that you can overtake your opponent.

Don't knock your opponent when you're on a corner. The chances are you'll end up spinning off the track too! If the only way you can overtake him is by ramming him, try to nudge him from the side rather than running into the back of him.

Finally, after you've taken a jump remember to take your finger off the fire button until you've landed — you only waste valuable boost points.

TRICKY OPPONENTS

Whizz Kid At the start of the race follow him at a safe distance. Watch how he drives to give you idea of what to expect when you try to overtake him. Near the end of the course, use your boost so that you are directly behind him — he should almost fill your field of vision (you'll need to have a good knowledge of the track). Now pull either left or right, accelerate and you're away.

Hot Rod Similar to the Whiz Kid but don't forget that you shouldn't try to overtake till the end of the course.

The Dodger One of the hardest opponents. The only real tip is to try and ram him out of the way.

Big Ed Has a habit of pulling wheelies whenever you get near. The best place to overtake him is on the jump. When you get near it, speed up and jump over him.

Dare Devil The hardest of the lower order drivers but if you're good and know the track you can boost it on the bends and take him on the outside. It takes cool nerves and a joystick of steel.

Myth

All formats

All the way from Martin Woods in Wallesey.

LEVEL ONE: PART ONE

Kill all the harpies and collect the fireballs. Now go two platforms down from where you attack the skeletons until one drops a sword. Collect this and cut loose the skeleton. Follow it. Now attack a skeleton. During the fight, its head should get cut off and fall into the flames. A demon will now emerge. Kill this with the fireballs and collect the trident it leaves behind. Find the chimera and use the trident. Exit to part two.

PART TWO

Run along until you find a lady. Kill her with your sword. Now carry on until you see a statue. Hit this so that it makes a sound then continue hitting it until a shield appears. Collect this and exit to part three.

PART THREE

Carefully find the medusa. Use your shield to get close to her then cut her head off. Collect this and use it as a weapon to fight the Hydra.

LEVEL TWO: PART ONE

Easy, just watch out for the bird then kill it.

PART TWO

Kill all the monsters and collect the daggers left behind. At some point your sword will disappear. Don't worry, an even more powerful weapon will appear. When you find the woman pick up the object next to her and use it to kill the imps. A dragon will now appear. Stick your sword into its throat. Now throw a couple of daggers into its neck and run past onto the next part.

PART THREE

Run up the platforms and you will arrive at a castle door guarded by a shooting eye. Stab the eye and continue on up. Use a dagger to take out the next eye then cross the drawbridge. To progress to the next level throw as many daggers as possible at the man in the chair.

Dragon Spirit

PC Engine

Peter Rolls, Market Harborough.

There is a secret continue option on the game which can be accessed with the following procedure.

On the title screen hold down either fire button then press the other. You should now here a short bleep indicating that the mode is in operation. Now play the game as normal. When the game finally ends you will be presented with the continue option.

Monty on the Run

C64

A classic game that has recently been rereleased under the Kixx budget label. If you don't already own it rush out now and buy it. It's a bargain not to be missed. Colin Ross from Loughborough reminds us all how to find the infinite lives cheat.

Play the game as normal, obtaining a good enough score to register on the high score table. Then type in 'I WANT TO CHEAT'. Now start the game again and progress passed the first screen. On the second screen there is a stretch of water which you normally have to jump over. This time there is a boat on it. Jump onto the boat and you will be awarded with infinite lives.

FREE SOFTWARE

Want to earn yourself £50 of software of your choice and a stylish TGM T-shirt? Okay, so you're not so sure about the T-shirt (you could always use it as a duster or if you've got exceptionally big hands it would make a great glove puppet) but the software would come in useful. This month the software prize hasn't been awarded to anyone because no-one sent in a good enough set of tips. Send your tips (and maps!) to:TGM Tricks 'n' Cheats, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.

CUT OUT PAGE

WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK OF TGM ANYWAY?

Have you a passionate opinion about TGM? Do you know how to make the world's most happenin' magazine better? Or do you just want to win lots of free software? Whatever the case, there's no need to take to the waterlogged streets of Ludlow, chanting slogans against the Newsfield secret police. No, all you need to do is get out a pen and fill in the form below. We want to know what you really think of TGM, so be truthful, honest and remember to include your address. The first two entries drawn out of a hat will win £50 software vouchers, while the next five get TGM goodies including a binder, T-shirt and *Le Clic* camera! So get writing now and tell us!!

CUT OUT PAGE

1. Are you: MALE ❑ FEMALE ❑

2. How old are you:......................

3. Are you:
❑ AT SCHOOL
❑ COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY
❑ WORKING FULL TIME
❑ WORKING PART TIME

4. If you work what is your occupation:..
❑ UNEMPLOYED
❑ OTHER — please state: ....

5. What is your weekly income:
❑ UP TO £5 ❑ £5-10 ❑ £10-30
❑ £30-100 ❑ £100-200 ❑ £200-PLUS

6. On average, how many other people read your copy of TGM..............................

7. How do you get TGM
❑ SUBSCRIPTION
❑ RESERVED OR DELIVERED BY NEWSAGENTS
❑ OFF THE SHELF AT NEWSAGENT
❑ OFF THE SHELF AT ANOTHER TYPE OF SHOP (state which type) ....

8. Which other magazines do you buy:
❑ ACE
❑ CRASH
❑ ST/Amiga Action
❑ Computer & Video Games
❑ New Computer Express
❑ The One
❑ Zero
❑ ZZAP!
OTHER (please specify) ....

9. Do you use your computer for anything other than playing games:
❑ YES ❑ NO
If yes please state other uses: ....
....

10. Do you intend to buy a new computer or games console in the next six months:
❑ YES ❑ NO
If yes please specify make and model.

11. On average how much do you spend on computer games every week:
❑ £2-5 ❑ £6-10 ❑ £11-15 ❑ £16-20
If more than £20 please specify:.................................

12. Which type of software do you usually buy:
❑ Budget ❑ Full-price

13. Of all the utilities and peripherals, you either own or would like to own, which three do you think are the most important:
....
....

14. Where do you usually buy your software:
❑ SPECIALIST COMPUTER STORE
❑ CHAINSTORE (WH SMITH, BOOTS ETC)
❑ MAIL ORDER

15. What is the major influence on your decision to buy a computer game:
❑ A REVIEW IN TGM
❑ OTHER MAGAZINE REVIEWS
❑ ADVERTISING
❑ AUTHOR-PROGRAMMING TEAM
❑ PRODUCER ie SOFTWARE HOUSE
❑ PRICE
❑ PREVIEW OR OTHER EDITORIAL MENTION

16. What type of game do you enjoy playing (in order of preference: 1 = highest, 6 = lowest)?
........Adventures ....Simulations
........Arcade-Adventures ....RPG
........Shoot-'em-ups ....Strategy
OTHER (please specify) ....
....

17. Please award marks out of ten for each of the following features in TGM
........Advertisements ....Preview Features
........General Features ....Reviews
........Our Man In Japan ....Tips
........Adventures ....TGM Shopping
........Competitions ....Music
........Boot-Up ....ReaderPage
........Graphics

18. Do you enjoy reading film/game tie-in features:
❑ YES ❑ NO

19. Please rate TGM's coverage of software out of ten:
.........News ....Previews ....Reviews

20. Do you like the review style?
❑ YES ❑ NO

21. Are the reviews detailed enough?
❑ YES ❑ NO

22. Are the reviews long enough?
❑ YES ❑ NO

23. Are there enough screenshots?
❑ YES ❑ NO

24. Are the comments detailed enough?
❑ YES ❑ NO

25. How often do you agree with the ratings?
❑ Always ❑ Usually ❑ Rarely ❑ Never

26. Do you used TGM as a source of reference when buying software?
❑ Always ❑ Sometimes ❑ Never

27. Do you subscribe to Micronet/Compunet or any other interactive BB: ❑ YES ❑ NO

28. Which of the following do/would you object to seeing in TGM?
❑ Console reviews ❑ Arcade coverage
❑ Modems ❑ PBM

29. Do you own a CD player? ❑ YES ❑ NO

30. Are there any other areas of computer leisure you'd like to see more coverage on ....
....
....
....

31. Do you use TGM as a source of reference when buying software:
❑ ALWAYS ❑ SOMETIMES ❑ NEVER

32. What are your favourite features in TGM:
....
....
....

33. What type of computer/console do you own?
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....

34. If you were Editor of TGM for a day what would you change or include? (You may use another sheet of paper if you wish)
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Now cut out this page (or a photocopy) and send it to: TGM Questionnaire, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB. Get your opinions here by April 15, for a chance to be heard, taken seriously and — most importantly — to WIN a prize!

Make sure we know where to send your prize, should you win — fill in your name and address below:

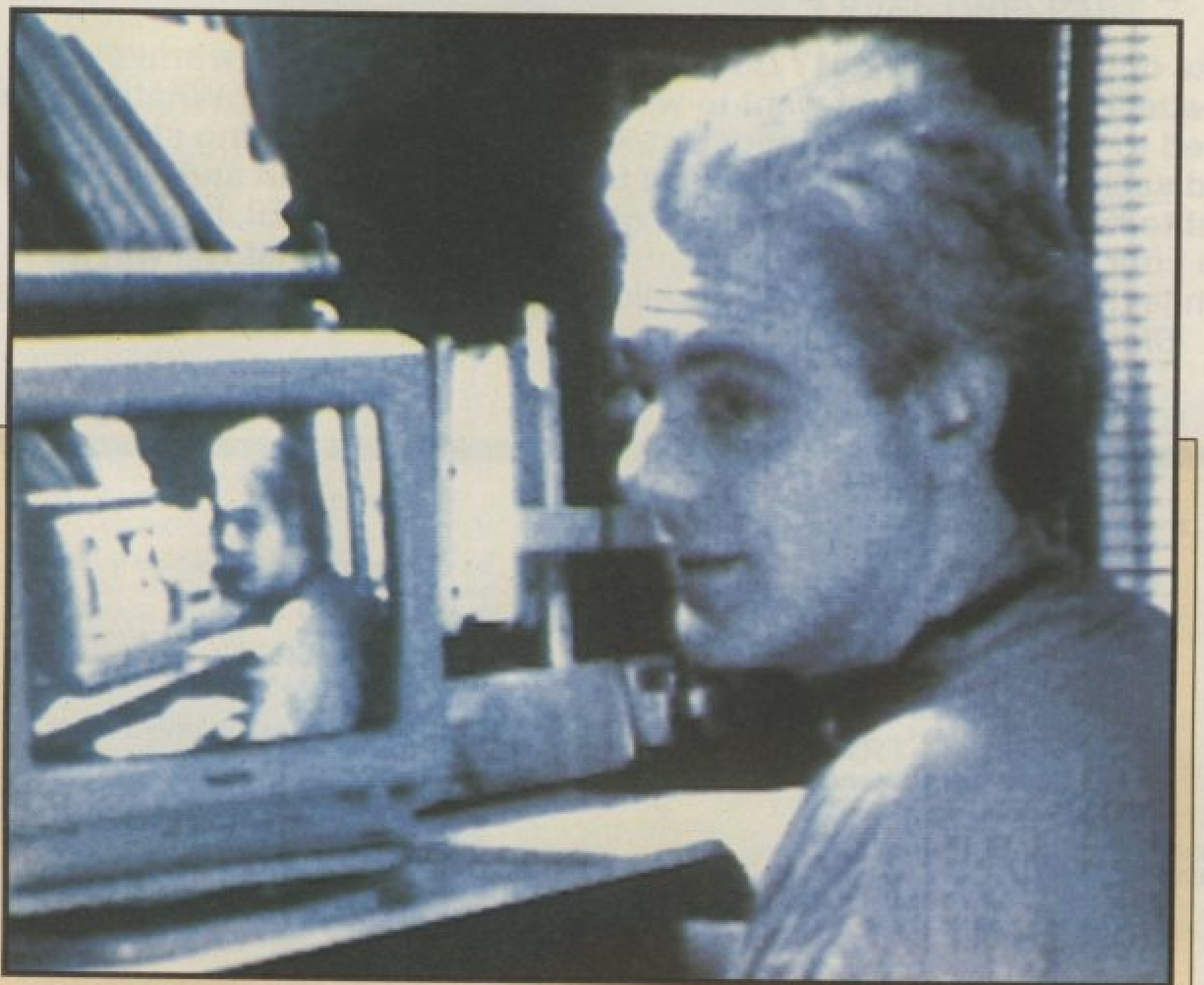
Name ....

Address...

....

....Postcode..........................

INDUSTRY WITHOUT



The problem with any attempt to teach a procedure as non-verbal as drawing is that the artists themselves have little idea how they achieve what they do. No doubt this has something to do with the many unique, individual elements involved when constructing a piece of art. There are however various tricks of the trade, even if there aren't any hard and fast rules.

A picture is conceived, broadly, in one of two ways: either as a complete entity, just popping into your mind as it were, or as an extended improvised doodle. Both approaches can be facilitated by judicious use of the typical features of any graphics package. (One of the most useful of all of these is the 'undo' button.) Furthermore, many packages enable the image to be altered at various stages or quickly saved to RAM disk. This allows for experimentation without messing up the bits you're pleased with. You can try out a new position or feature and learn as you go, retracing your steps if you run into difficulties. Definitely not possible with conventional art techniques!

DON'T LOOK FOR PERFECTION

The mistake many novices make is trying to achieve perfection first time. The picture should be built up layer by layer, almost like bringing the thing into ever sharper focus. The Old Masters built up works in stages; starting out with crude black and white sketches (the Cartoon) and superimposing an increasingly refined image by successively blurring and reducing the contrast of the previous stage (Scumbling), overpainting and finally applying ever more transparent layers of paint (Glazing). This approach is made even more flexible using a computer as the whole image can be broken up into discrete elements then only assembled

PETE LYON: ARTIST

By way of a brief personal introduction, I would describe myself as an argumentative, ex-hippie, Scouser who hates football. My schooling lay somewhere between Catholic Grammer School and creative vandalism. From an early age I drew obsessively and despite an interest in science, eventually found myself with a degree in Fine Art/Painting. After a long list of jobs and bouts of poverty I amalgamated various Christmas presents to acquire a 16K Speccy and was immediately besotted. I was — still am — doing a variety of graphic odd-jobs, book covers and illustrations, but my real ambition was to become a programmer.

The many hours wasted playing addictive games convinced me that I could come up with game graphics the equal of anything around. The possibilities of animating my pictures or even creating whole worlds of imagination was intoxicating to a long standing science-fiction fan such as myself. At this stage I had never even attempted a colour image as I had only a monochrome monitor and no TV modulator. Answering an ad in the press, I was put in contact with Steve Bak who immediately demanded that I demonstrate my worth. I produced an awful picture, being completely unfamiliar with the art package and hung-over.

Nevertheless, I must have shown some talent because we subsequently collaborated on games such as Karate Kid 2, Goldrunner, Genesis and Leatherneck. These were published by Microdeal for whom I also produced the graphics for Tanglewood, Airball, International Soccer and Fright Night. Since then I have come up with the graphics for many companies, principally Mirrorsoft and Hewson. These include Astaroth, Eliminator and Scruples.



ASTAROTH

This last year or so I have not been nearly as active. Almost a case of burnout you might say. Being a freelancer has its drawbacks; months of work can be wiped out if the programmer fails to adequately implement the original game design by either reducing or ditching the graphics all together, or going dramatically over the deadline and incurring the contractual wrath of the commissioning company. (I'm sure they moan about the artist, too!)

ART IS BRUTALITY

(John Ruskin,
23 February 1870)

Are you a brute or a maestro? Think you have the drop on paint when it comes to computer creation? Then brush up your technique with Pete Lyon, one of Britain's top graphic designers on the computer...

later. In other words, the whole process is best considered as a logistical exercise, the parts such as foreground and background being treated differently and ideally in an optimum sequence. I have attempted to demonstrate this in a sequence of simple pictures showing the stages leading to a finished piece (The Daily Stun sequence).

The choice of palette is important. It is really, because of the limited colour displays of home computers, a careful balancing act. The colours are chosen on either a logical basis, ie, the sky is blue, the grass is green, etc, or as sequences or ranges of shades from dark to light — all depending on the nature of the intended picture. The latter allows you to produce more rounded, smother shapes using the fine graduations of colour to define the mass, shape, shade and texture of the object. You will also need intermediate hues to reduce and blur the inevitable jagged edges resulting from the relatively low screen resolution on home computers (anti-aliasing). The main feature of a picture, such as a figure in the foreground, has the majority of the colours made available to it; usually fine variations on ochre, yellow and pink for flesh tones; whereas you can often get away with a single-colour silhouetted background. So don't use up the bulk of your precious colours doing fancy clouds in the sky, leaving only a few for the Noble Hero.

DIGITISING DILEMMAS

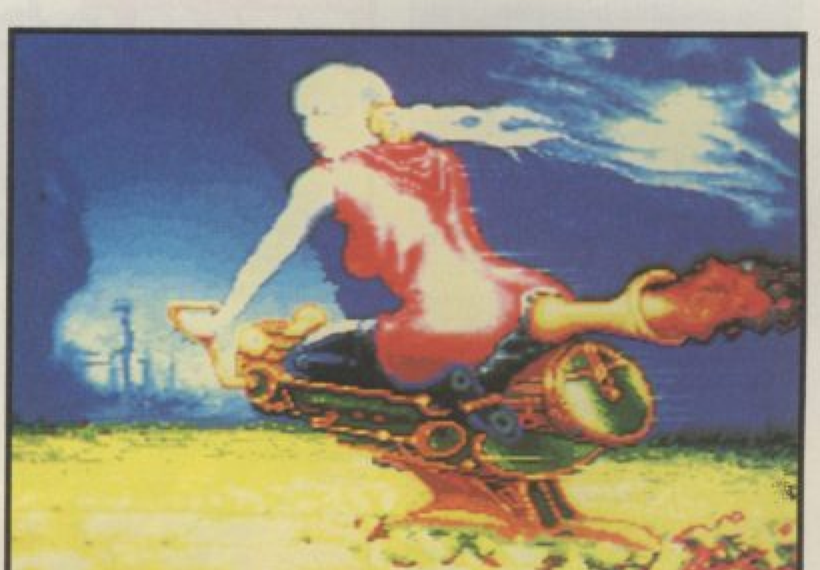
Almost as old as Art itself is the artful dodge. It goes back to the use of the Camera Obscura in the 15th century or tracing of shadows on the cave walls in Neolithic times. The use of the digitiser therefore has its honourable precedents. Scanners or digitisers are a useful short-cut. The thing is, though, that their use is easily detectable and tends to devalue the worth of an image. We all seem to prefer a hand-crafted article to that of a machine-generated one for deep and mysterious reasons beyond the scope of this article. In the past I have even had pictures dismissed scornfully as being 'merely' digitised when in fact they were not and had involved considerable time and effort on my part.

Digitising also has a place in the analysis of movement as an aid to animation, but again the effort of consistently redrawing each frame can be counter-productive. The early animators used a similar technique of tracing live action called Rotoscoping. It's useful for examining the orientation of complex objects from different angles, such as a rotating spaceship. But in this instance a 3-D CAD package is more useful, on the other hand it is more expense.

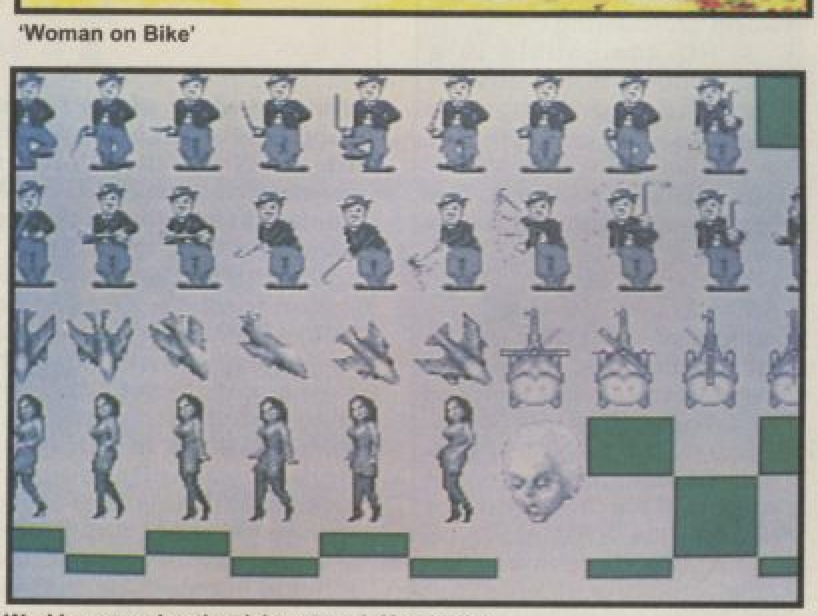
Animation is best approached by first drawing a key frame, possibly from different angles. Now, two or three key frames at the extreme ranges of movement, then the 'inbetweens', often using bits copied from previously rendered frames. The sequence is previewed and adjusted accordingly. It's a good idea to decide by how many pixels per frame the character is to move and then make sure the legs or whole wheels lock onto the ground and move across at exactly the right rate. A common source of information are the books of the pioneer photographer, Muybridge, published by Dover... everyone cribs from these!

LIAISING WITH THE PROGRAMMER

In producing the graphics for a game, I am very much restricted by the legitimate demands of the programmer. He will set limi-



'Woman on Bike'



Working on animation (above) and 'Montages'



WHAT HARD WARE

To achieve anything like adequate graphics on a 'home computer', the machine must be at least 16-bit and support at lease 256 colours. It must also be, by definition, affordable by the average-waged family, which means in practice below £1000 for a basic system. Briefly, this means the three 'A's: Archimedes, Amiga and Atari ST, with the possible inclusion of an expanded IBM PC clone (Amstrad?).

The Archie just about sneaks in under the bar with its excellent performance: 320x258 with 256 onscreen colours, or 640x256 and 16 colours. It's capable of much more, but that means expensive monitors and expansion cards.

Super fast colour FX can be achieved from an excellent onboard BASIC, however. Its software base is improving, but you are still out on a limb regarding the latest hotshot game releases. If you have any educational connections then it's worth considering.

A PC compatible is a good option, but it must be sporting an enhanced graphics card, which makes it as expensive with similar graphic capabilities to the Archie, although not nearly as powerful.

Then there are the ST and Amiga.I would say the Amiga wins out over the ST for colour work, having the same screen resolution but a larger display area. There's also the easily useable 64 colours, compared to the ST's 16. And, of course, the HAM mode on the Amiga, boasting some 4096 possible shades, but it's awkward to use and ties up the processor; good for digitised pictures, though.

The ST can be tweaked to produce extra onscreen colours, but again there are penalties incurred in its ease of use. Where it scores over the Amiga, apart from being the cheapest of all these machines, is in monochrome. If desktop publishing is your burning passion then this is easily your best bet, having a screen resolution of 840x400 and some excellent software support.

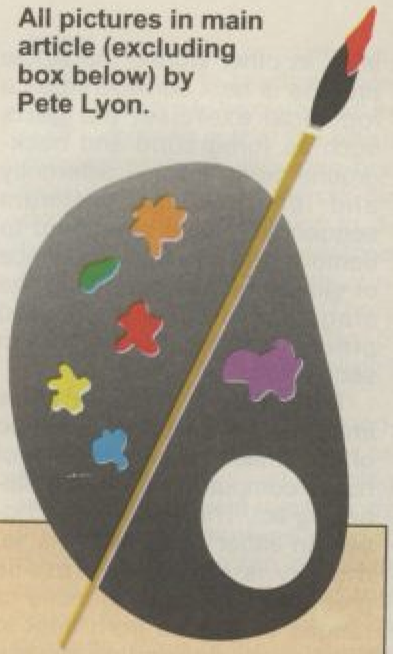


'Daily Stun' in progress (above), and below, Deluxe Paint II in action telescoping Robin Candy's 'Rent'

tations of colour useage, sprite and block size, and total number of these to be drawn, based on his own method of programming that particular game's features. *It's no use blaming me if the main character is too small!* The amount of creative input I'm allowed varies, but normally it is my job to come up with an overall style for a game and then try to fit in all the elements. Like the approach I have described earlier, I try to do representative sketches of all parts of a game: main sprites, background blocks, status panel, high score table, typefaces, loading screen or title sequence and effects (weapons, explosions, etc). Often changes are made in the course of producing the game and it therefore pays to not develop each element too much and allow for possible changes. Test sequences and mockups of the games area also help all concerned to monitor progress and check whether the separate pieces work together.

The background blocks are then assembled into a map using some quirky piece of software provided by the programmer. They often like to do this entirely themselves because the gameplay is dependent on the exact disposition of these blocks, however since I drew them and often have a more developed visual imagination, I prefer to do this myself. This whole procedure is interrupted by the commissioning software house demanding demo copies which are always late and consequently this involves delayed money. (We need this to buy food!)

All pictures in main article (excluding box below) by Pete Lyon.



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

I have used all of the home computers mentioned within the article at one time or another. Degas, Neo and Paintworks are the packages I started with on the ST.

Now that it has built-in animation features, I find I use Deluxe Paint III on the Amiga for games work even though it does not support HAM. For this I go to Photolab as I can have screens in different modes simultaneously, enabling me to easily interchange images. I find it best to sketch in half-brite mode and add extra effects in HAM later. There are other excellent packages but you get used to operating one and can use it speedily. Relearning any other system involves acquiring alternative work habits, slows you down and can be frustrating. Just the different mouse button protocols can be irritating. It's worse than relearning the gear change or indicator switch positions on an unfamiliar car, everything's fine until you encounter the roundabout at rush hour.

Sculpt 3-D (Amiga) is about the best for the limited amount of coloured 3-D work I do. Combinations of D2D, Pixmate and Picswitch enable me to transfer files between the ST and Amiga with relative ease. I really need someone to knock me up a cable and software to perform this chore... any offers?

In the DTP field, I have Mega ST 2 with SLM804 laser printer, running either Calamus or Signum software.

I use either the Silicon Animation Machine (ST) or DigiView (Amiga) to digitise. Realtime digitisers are best for general usage. Recently Rombo's Vidi-Amiga/ST has proved to be cheap and effective. A good, high resolution mouse is vital, as I find graphics tablets awkward simply because of space restrictions. It can make it difficult to tap the keys for all those important shortcuts. In general, I tend to under use all the extra goodies available to me and stick to simply drawing the image straight onto the screen, never sketching out things on paper beforehand. This is despite a determination to keep my more traditional skills in good working order by taking on the odd book-cover commission.



Ant att

CD technology is no longer a thing of the future — as many PC Engine owners will testify. You too can have real music and megabytes of graphics now, today, and in your own home. While at the recent CES Show in Las Vegas, Marshal M Rosenthal stepped back to the Fifties and forward in technology to take part in the NEC/Cinemaware project that brings It Came From The Desert to PC Engine CD-ROM owners.

Technology has moved a long way since we first marvelled at the technological boundaries passed when the Atari 2600 displayed four sprites instead of two. Or when Frogger featured two-tone music. Not to say things have progressed would be crazy.

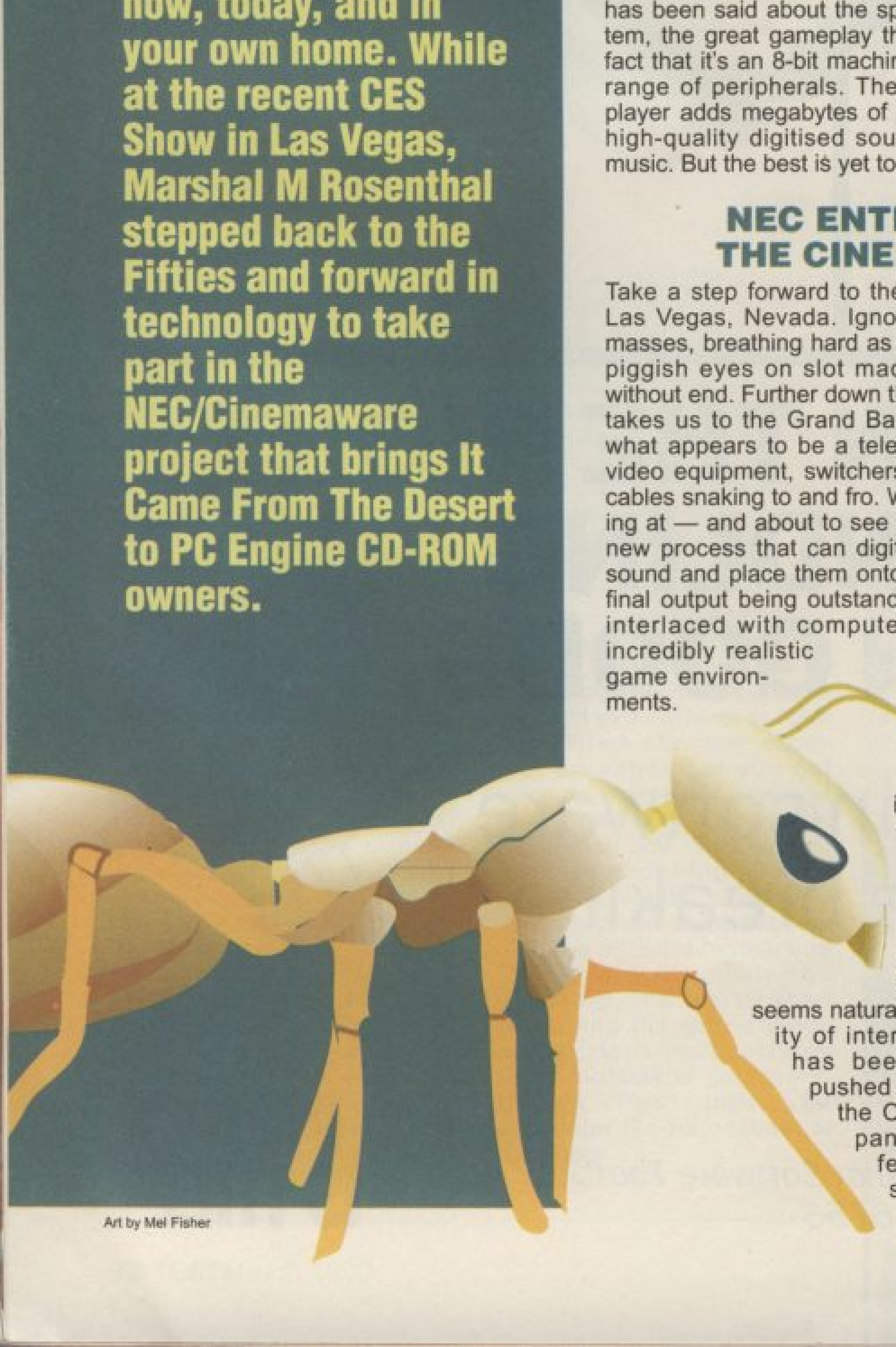
But, nowadays, technology rarely sells itself, rather a very big marketing machine. Sometimes we get amazing boundary-pushers like the Amiga, and other times we can get the Game Boy. A machine that could hardly be described as an advance in technology, but still a fun little gadget with a high *perceived* value — hardly at the cutting edge of technology, though. However, what's important is that innovations continue.

The latest piece of ground-breaking hardware is undoubtedly NEC's PC Engine (known in the States as Turbo Grafx) with its innovative interactive CD player. Much has been said about the speed of the system, the great gameplay that obviates the fact that it's an 8-bit machine and the wide range of peripherals. The additional CD player adds megabytes of information and high-quality digitised sound effects and music. But the best is yet to come...

NEC ENTER THE CINEMA

Take a step forward to the Bally Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. Ignore the teeming masses, breathing hard as they focus their piggish eyes on slot machines whirling without end. Further down the endless halls takes us to the Grand Ballroom and into what appears to be a television set; with video equipment, switchers, cameras and cables snaking to and fro. What we're looking at — and about to see in action — is a new process that can digitise people and sound and place them onto CD discs. The final output being outstanding video/audio interlaced with computer graphics for incredibly realistic game environments.

And it's for (no big surprise) the PC Engine. The project is the result of a marriage between NEC and Cinemaware. It seems natural — as the quality of interactive gaming has been a standard pushed ever higher by the Californian company. I take out a few moments to swap stories with Cinemaware President, Bob Jacob (we went to the same school), and notice that his eyes are gleaming with delight as he promises that I won't be disappointed.



Art by Mel Fisher

Cinemaware intend to demonstrate the system using a member of the audience. I wonder who it will be. 'Me, me,' I squeak, while shooting two fellow, competing journalists to the floor (hey, this is America). And because I'm so special, attractive and possess such a magnetic personality (and a .44 Magnum), they choose me. (Okay, for real, it's because I bribed the technician a few minutes ago.) But you don't get to be at the forefront of technology without listening to David Riordan, director of the Interactive/Entertainment Group for Cinemaware. He explains to the fact-hungry audience all about the history of the development, and why it came to be.

'We at Cinemaware come from a diverse background, with many of us — including myself — having television and movie experience. The idea of true 'interaction' requires many things — choices to make, creative leaps to take, but mostly the ability to do more than just suspend belief while game playing. You have to be able to move past the interface and get *into* the game.

'This has not been easy to do,' notes Riordan, 'especially when dealing with computer graphics — images that are approximating reality. Regardless of how interesting, they are not actual life. True, It Came From The Desert is awesome on the Amiga, but that's not the end of the road. This is where the CD-G comes into action, and where what we call Multi-Media begins.'

CD-G is a device which can translate images as well as sound from a compact disc onto a computer. These images can be manipulated to an extent, but they're not the last word in a rapidly moving technology.

FROM SET TO SCREEN

How all of this works is rooted both in traditional film techniques as well as computerized ones. As Riordan points out, 'photo-real' is created by having actual voices and sound, plus video-quality onscreen images. The set before us approximates the one Cinemaware is using for the project. The large green screen is the backdrop for the actors to appear against. Video switchers enable the actor's image to be 'dropped' onto another scene — similar to placing a paper doll onto a painting. The green behind the actor doesn't 'read' as the video signal passes through, and so disappears.

Riordan continues: 'Using CD-G as the working medium gives us the capacity to hold the huge amount of data required for 'photo-real' gaming, and, of course, possesses the necessary fast accessing time. Full video animation hits about 30 frames a second. It's a bit jerky at times but not

tack !!



readily noticeable because of all that's going on. Our video backgrounds replace computer art for scenes that are very real-looking. We did a lot of testing for audio and came up with a frame rate of 6-15 — it sounds terrific. Overall, through careful manipulation of the scenes, we are able to create the proper environment and lip-sync the voices with the images. Also keep in mind that the graphic and sampling abilities of the PC Engine help to take some of the heat off what we are producing with CD-G.'

Getting to that point means turning finished video into digitised images. This is done by taking the tape (shot on professional Betacam pro 0.5-inch) and feeding the RGB outputs into a PC that does the conversions in realtime — chugging away to turn it all into 256 colours, which will later be reduced to 16. Of course, this all happens after the actors have been successfully taped.

Riordan explains that the technology is still in development, and what will be seen today can be called 'talking heads', as computer sprites are still predominant. 'But wait till you see giant ants moving on a video background, and hear actual voices,' he crows. 'It's great!'

LIGHTS, CAMERAS, ACTION

So now it's time to demonstrate the system. Before I get to my starring role, Riordan introduces the actress who plays the crazy cult leader's floozy blonde daughter, the kind who gives a new meaning to the term home-wrecker. He gives us a demonstration of how she has to act to the camera in order to convey information.

Above, Marshal Rosenthal and co-starring blonde floozy prepare to take on the ants in this fully-digitized screen grab. Below, Cinemaware's studio in real life as it was seen at the recent CES



Then displayed are the necessary alternate scenes for each action we might take in the game. This is the 'branching' found in interactive games.

Finally, I get up and stand opposite her (considering the reaction from the crowd, even computer journalists recognise an attractive woman when they see one). A video camera is aimed our way, and we can see two technicians seated to our left; one operating the video-imaging, the other working the graphic interfacing. We act out a sequence where an ant approaches — she tosses me a gun and I nab that sucker with the first shot. *(Tumultuous applause.)*

Of course we didn't see anything but the green background through all of this (though the blanks going off when I fired made me jump). Playing back the videotape of the sequence, we can see how our images are superimposed onto a mountain scene (this coming from another VCR), with the computer graphic ant also laid in. She points to the ant. I take the gun and aim it at the ant which is hovering menacingly near. I fire. The ant drops dead. Neat!

'And keep in mind that we've many more projects in the works.' When we ask him what they are, he smiles a wait and see — allowing for the advent of CD-I (the Philips CD graphics player with real TV images), it means incredible possibilities for interaction. CD-I is made to produce video effects, with two planes of video being concurrently handled. Not only can full-motion be enacted, such as what was demonstrated by NEC, but in 256 colours as well.

There's no denying that compact disc technology — whether it's existing CD-G or the upcoming CD-I — is opening up a whole new visual experience for gaming, bringing the kind of power and playability that borders on being part of a movie or television show. Perhaps one day we will all have the ability to put ourselves into a video game. TRace ON, dear reader.

COMPETITION

WIN! WIN! WIN!
A SUPER GRAFX!

THANX TO MICROMEDIA



We brought you the first stunning pictures of the PC Engine and now you've seen the latest Japanese games machine — the Super Grafx , the mindblowing PC Engine II! So who better to collaborate with than the first UK company to import the PC Engine, Shropshire-based Micromedia. Micromedia's version of the new NEC Super Grafx is so impressive (see page 82) that we're giving one away! This is undoubtedly one of the world's best consoles and here's how you can get your hands on it...

Scattered around the page are screen shots of five whizzo PC Engine games. Just identify each picture, placing your answers on the form below, fill in the tie-breaker limerick, and send off the form to the usual address and you could be playing Japan's hottest machine very soon!

THE ULTIMATE ENGINE EXPERIENCE

1...

2...

3...

4...

5...

There was a young man from Japan
Who was a PC Engine fan
He liked games in space
Especially Battle Ace

....

PAL ❐ SCART ❐ MORE INFO ON THE PC ENGINE/SUPER GRAFX ❐
(PLEASE TICK BOX)

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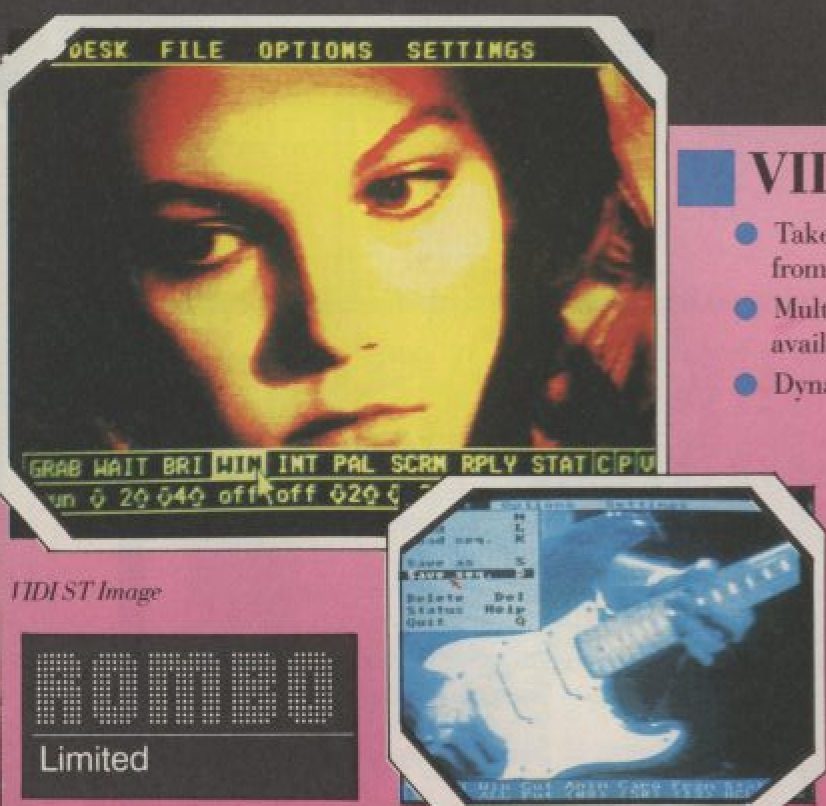
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VIDI ST Image

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The ADVENTURE STRATEGY ROLEPLAY Column

Aviation expert, Paul Rigby takes quill in hand and reveals exclusive information on the ultimate air traffic controller, wonders where Carmen Sandiego has gone, and discloses the details of the latest adventure PARTI

Beat the ATC strike

Headache? Tense, nervous headache? High blood-pressure, ulcers and bloodshot eyes? Yes? So, how long have you been an air traffic controller, then? For those of you without the above symptoms — but think it would be 'really neat' to look and feel like death warmed up — Wesson International from America have the ultimate in ATC simulations. Called Tracon, it promises to blow MicroProse's Kennedy Approach to the four winds ([click] *that's a 9-0, 1-8-0, 2-7-0 and 3-6-0 degrees, you copy?*). The claim being that the latter was a 'game' while Tracon is pure simulation. Available on the PC, compatible with VGA downward, Tracon offers a variety of difficulty levels, pilot skills, weather and so on.

SPECTRUM STARTERS

Incidentally, I've had quite a few requests (mainly from Spectrum owners) about which adventure would make an ideal purchase for a beginner. Rather than splashing out on a Level 9 game and then finding out that adventures are not your thing after all (leaving you £15.00 down) there is an excellent four-pack produced for the Spectrum by respected adventure author, Walter Pooley. All four adventures are text-only. They contain logical puzzles (a rarity in itself!) and are immensely enjoyable — I've played all four and heartily recommend them. Mansion Quest, Castle Adventure, Mission X and Desert Island can be purchased for a measly £5.00 from Walter Pooley, 46 Exeter Road, Bootle, Liverpool L20 7BL.

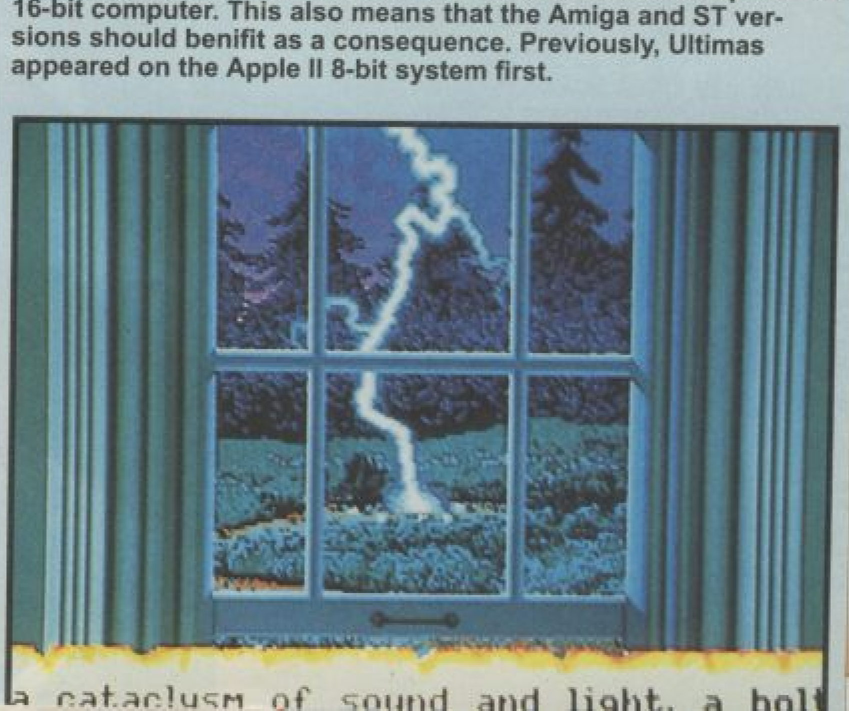
I wouldn't be surprised if Domark were to release a series of very interesting adventures based on that arch villain, Carmen Sandiego. now they handle Broderbund releases. Broderbund's Carmen games (which include Where in Europe is Carmen Sandiego and Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego) mix adventure and (gulp) education (eg, in Europe it's a touch of geography, while in Time a smattering of history). However, I have heard good reports of this series to the extent that the educational side of things is totally transparent. The series is famed for its comprehensive packaging — normally some sort of massive encyclopedia.

American based Command Simulations have produced Blitzkrieg at the Ardennes which lets you simulate the action at the Battle of the Bulge in 1944. Available on the Amiga in standard and one meg versions, Blitzkrieg includes V-2 rockets, German saboteurs, aerial bombardment and three map resolutions; while the enhanced one meg version includes hidden movement, combat medal awards, better AI, adjustable intelligence reports, etc.

PARTICLES GALORE

It's PARTI time! Right lets shuffle over to Dr Dumont's place for a touch of the old particle acceleration — he has a secret punch recipe, you know. Actually, PARTI stands for Particle Accelerator and Reality Translator Integrator. Dr Dumont, a sort of Uncle Clive-type prof, was teaching the computer how to view sub-atomic particles. He needed a human link (interface to you) to achieve a mental connection with the computer, things

Following exclusive details of Ultima VI in the October issue of TGM, here are exclusive pictures of the PC VGA development. This means that Ultima VI is the first Ultima to be developed on a 16-bit computer. This also means that the Amiga and ST versions should benifit as a consequence. Previously, Ultimas appeared on the Apple II 8-bit system first.



went predictably wrong and, to cut a long story short, your mind is now in the computer. You, of course, have to get out — in a mental sort of way. Bit like Zen, I suppose. Anyway, PARTI, a pure text adventure written by Michael and Muffy Berlyn (creators of Infidel, Suspended and Tass Times in Tonetown), is available on the PC from America's First Row Software. Other versions (possibly C64 and Amiga) may follow.

GAP DOWN UNDER

Fans of Panther Games' Fire Brigade (awarded a Golden Scroll in TGM) may be interested to know that the next release from the Australian impresarios will be Fulda Gap. Incidentally, the original Fire Brigade made many friends, not least the US Army who are now using it to study the logistics of supply. Colleagues of mine in the States have even suggested that Fire Brigade may form the basis of a rather serious, second generation, ground warfare simulator for the US Army called, funnily enough, 2GWS.

After a second generation simulator, it's farewell from a second generation games reviewer. Goodnight, God Bless and stay frosty...

Paul Rigby, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.



GOLDEN SCROLL

Spectrum £12.99

THE GENERAL

CCS

The General shows CCS and author Ian Williams at their most innovative. This is because they have tried to emulate Peter Turcan's Battlescape system. What's so innovative about that, then? Well, consider a few facts. The game is for the Spectrum, occupies a single load (no disk remember) and fills 48K — a daunting task, indeed! It is the design of the gaming system that makes The General such a success.

The period adopted is the Napoleonic era, a favourite of mine. However, instead of trying to simulate one particular battle (like in ARC's Austerlitz), and probably incurring the wrath of devotees due to a lack of historical features or whatever, Ian Williams has decided to present a mythical battle.

You represent a small European state which is being attacked through your only opening, a narrow valley. Due to the limited access, only a small number of the enemy can attack at once.

The game offers good Fog of War features, such as distance (overcome by a nifty telescope feature) and smoke — a very important element which ARC's Austerlitz doesn't have. Similar to Battlescape, you give your orders in an English fashion — although it's a lot easier and quicker to use than Battlescape. Other features, such as realistic Napoleonic tactics, morale, reports and graphics, are all well integrated considering the lack of memory.

CCS are to be congratulated for producing such a well designed game which can be confidently recommended to any serious Spectrum Napoleonic Wargamer.

STRATEGY 90%

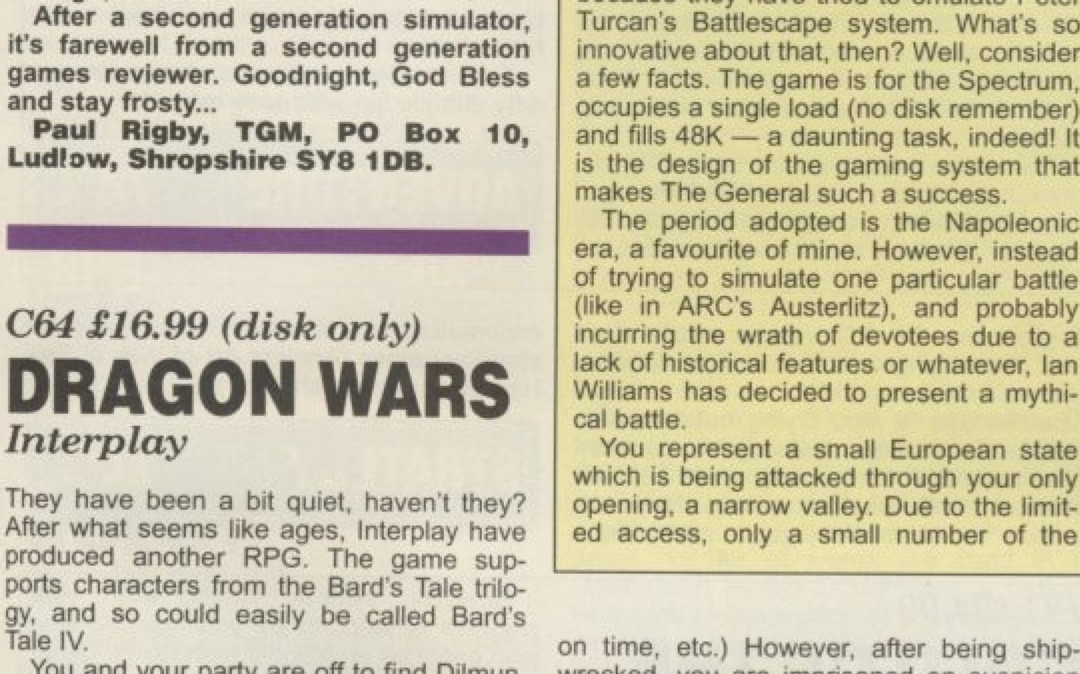
C64 £16.99 (disk only)

DRAGON WARS

Interplay

They have been a bit quiet, haven't they? After what seems like ages, Interplay have produced another RPG. The game supports characters from the Bard's Tale trilogy, and so could easily be called Bard's Tale IV.

You and your party are off to find Dilmun, a legendary city. (You know the sort of thing — pavements paved with gold, buses run on time, etc.) However, after being shipwrecked, you are imprisoned on suspicion of spellcasting — a habit which has been recently outlawed by the dastardly King Drake. You begin the game in Purgatory (bit like Butlins) from whence you must escape.



Interplay have taken the Bard's Tale system and upgraded selected elements in an effort to update it. The most important, but probably the most invisible, change is the introduction of an intricate plot. Interplay's Brian Fargo once told me that you could fully describe Bard's Tale I in about ten seconds (he did, too!). Dragon Wars introduces a much better storyline, utilising more character interaction, strange clues and so on.

The combat is improved with quite complex choices on ranged combat, type of attack and defence, etc. Spells have been extended to include categories like Druid Magic and Sun Magic. Also, attributes have been redesigned and there's a handy 3-D automapping option.

The end product is an RPG which is far better balanced than the Bard's Tale series ever was. Character animation is much improved making Dragon Wars an enjoyable romp, also delivering a good helping of humour.

RPG 83%

£5.00 (plus 1.00 p+p outside UK)

ADVENTURES ON THE SPECTRUM

Mike Gerrard, PO Box 7, Ramsey, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE17 2UZ.

My first book review! This is an interesting book on Spectrum adventures by 'industry vet' Mike Gerrard, who has produced a 128-page tome mostly packed with useful solutions.

In addition to the tips, there are chapters on the history of adventures, buying adventures, clubs and magazines (where's TGM then?), creating your own material and several useful addresses. I doubt whether the seasoned adventurer will find too much to interest them, however I do strongly recommend the book to any beginners out there, whatever computer they might own as the advice is generally non-specific, while the adventures covered by the solutions were, in many cases, published on other formats besides the Spectrum.

The book is an ideal introduction to all things adventurous. Giving helpful tips, advice and contacts which would normally take quite a while to find by normal methods. It is good to have all of this info in one compact book. Recommended.



Amiga, ST £24.95

TIME

Empire

In a similar manner to Future Wars, Time has you bouncing back into the past to save the future becoming rather nasty.

You control an onscreen character, in this object-manipulation adventure. The action is confined to a small window while the game controls are placed below. They include speech, movement icons, an examine icon and an operate icon. Four tiny windows represent your inventory space.

The game itself is rather easy. Objects cry out to be found as the examine 'eye' icon opens when you pass an object. Just click on it to see what you have discovered. Interaction is limited, as is movement, a rather two-dimensional left and right.

The game includes quite a few characters who pass on various bits of information and who provide quite a few puzzles by being stubborn, refusing to give you an object, not letting you past, etc.

I'm not too keen on some of the graphics. Although there's plenty of admirable facial animation, the characters tend to look like they have undergone drastic plastic surgery — and it hasn't quite healed yet...

Time can be recommended to beginners only. Simple fun with easy rewards.

ADVENTURE 74%

PC, Amiga, ST £24.99

ARMADA

ARC

Apart from a couple of reservations, I have been hugely impressed with Dr Peter Turcan's strategy games. However, Armada is the first Battlescape game to utilise a naval war scenario. The heart of the Battlescape system remains intact but a wide range of modifiers change your tactical and strategic outlook.

For example, there are a variety of rigging types: rigging and damaged sections of a ship can snag and foul other ships, hamper the efficiency of battle actions and so on. And you can board other ships, however, I was disappointed to learn that you cannot man an enemy ship with a friendly crew to fight on your side.

There are a variety of ships, cannons, tactical formations and so on but, again, it is a shame that the 'fireship' concept has been left out. Weather, as you might expect, plays a big part. It is also good to see that land affords cover for the ships in certain cases.

The unique English order system is a moot point with the Battlescape series. But, whatever your opinion, you will need some time with it before you become comfortable. A unique option on the ST allows you to snapshot the current screen to printer or disk — ideal for record keeping. Speaking of graphics, the PC version really does need something more than the indistinguishable CGA support.

Battlescape is also crying out for some realtime animation instead of constant screen updates. The action would become far more subtle and acceptable. However, Armada is still an enjoyable and unique experience. It certainly puts the other naval strategy games (Ancient Art of War at Sea, High Seas, etc) to shame.

STRATEGY 84%

PC £24.99

GOLD OF THE AMERICAS

SSG/Electronic Arts

Gold of the Americas is a simple — but addictive — strategy game, for one to four players. The game is set in the days of Cortez and Drake, when the big European countries colonised the New World that was to become America.

You play one of the four big boys — England, Spain, France or Portugal — who are all out to grab as many colonies as possible. Game difficulty varies with which country you adopt as well as the usual individual skill settings. Your map of North and South America is conveniently divided up into territories just waiting to be discovered.

You must set your explorers off to discover each of these territories. If they manage to conquer the tribes who live there you can move in. Once the colony establishes itself, you can improve it; exploit, mine, import slaves and generally make a complete pig's ear of the whole country.

However, income derived from your colonies is stripped by your lovable king who imposes amazingly high taxes. Other income is derived from raiding other colonies, invading them and pillaging other countries' cargo ships. Difficulties faced include the indigenous tribesmen, revolting slaves, colonies who seek independence, pirates and other countries putting the boot in.

You have a total of 30 turns to find the most victory points to be regarded as the winner. As such, Gold of the Americas maybe relatively simple to play but it quickly becomes compelling.

STRATEGY 87%



PC £24.95

THE THIRD COURIER

Accolade

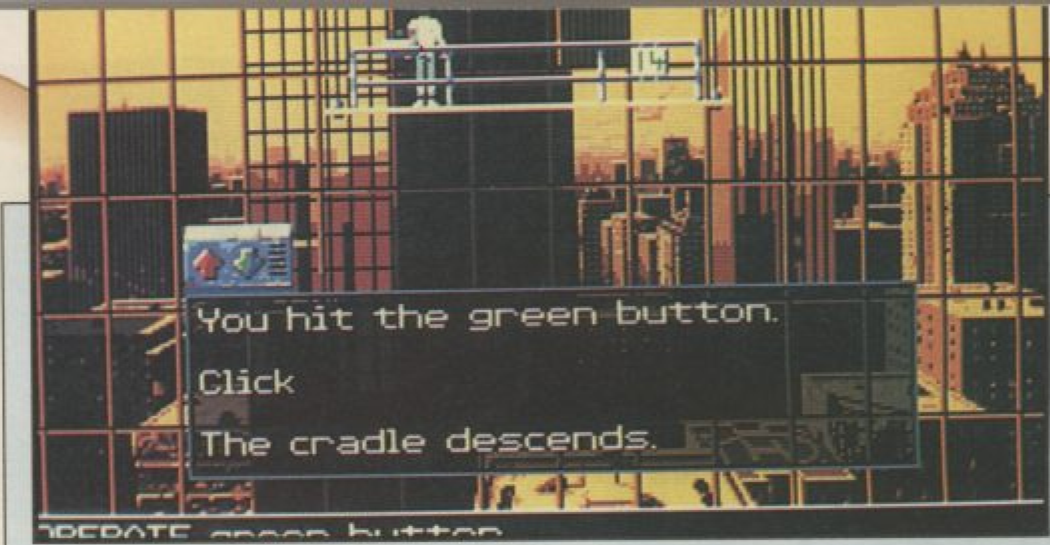
Accolade's The Third Courier flings you into a world of spies, deceit, intrigue and silly codenames. You are Moondancer, master spy, on the trail of a set of stolen NATO defence plans.

Before you begin the actual game, though, you must create your character. This is done by selecting your sex, age, cover occupation and family leisure activity, upon which you will be given a range of five attributes and select personality traits (which can either be advantageous or detrimental to your character). Finally, you will see your experience with its own grade levels.

While graphics are pretty good, PC sound is weak, without any sound board support. While the scenario is promising — an urgent, stealthy feel — the gameplay is somewhat flawed. Most character meetings are frequent, but the majority are worthless as most people have little useful to say.

This repetitiveness merged with the convoluted menu selections results in a game that tells a tale of lost opportunities rather than successful implementation.

RPG 68%



Amiga £29.95

FUTURE WARS

Delphine

I must admit, even The Sunday Sport has never published a 'Window Cleaner Saves World Shock!' headline, however, that's exactly what Delphine has us doing in the latest award-winning French adventure.

The plot? The aliens have tried — and failed — to defeat the Earth in open conflict so they have turned devious. You must travel back to several time periods to stop their evil plans.

In a similar way to the Sierra adventures, you must move your character around the screen, manipulating objects and solving puzzles. However, graphically and sonically, Future Wars is far superior to Sierra's offerings. Animation sequences are well done and the digitised effects are crisp and clear, as are the excellent integral graphics.

In a strange way, one of Future War's biggest advantages is its largest failing. When you click the right mouse button a short menu will appear next to the cursor. This means that time is not wasted typing in text and you don't have to travel the screen to find the menu. However, this does restrict the number of commands available — text input would have widened the scope for puzzles. Although cycling through the menu options eventually finds the response you need. Future War's other fault is its precision in placing your character, otherwise he might easily miss a clue. This can sometimes be very annoying.

However, on the whole, Future Wars can be recommended for adventurers everywhere.

ADVENTURE 82%

Amiga £24.95

DUNGEON QUEST

IMAGE TECH

The game begins with a cry of help from a friend. In fact, you only have part of the damaged letter which tells of his imprisonment in an evil land, full of evil things etc. So, deciding that you're totally off your rocker, you leave your fortune, abandon your happiness and cast away your peace of mind to rescue this whining sod. Makes you sick how inconsiderate some people are...

Dungeon Quest (DQ) exhibits some wonderful graphics, magnificent stereo digitised effects but then things go downhill. It's uncanny, really, but DQ reminds me of Ooze (Dragonscape) in its advantages and its failings. For a start, the game is totally linear and the parser is very weak. Only a small number of words are used in its vocabulary. In fact DQ showed a remarkable lack of imagination. It is always nice to be able to examine and manipulate objects and so on, even if they have no relevance to the game. I can't really recommend DQ to anyone. Why bother when there are plenty of other excellent adventures about?

ADVENTURE 48%

Spectrum (48K or 128K) £2.50 each, £4.50 both

MAGNETIC MOON & STARSHIP QUEST

FSF Adventures, 40 Harvey Gardens, Charlton, London SE7 8AJ.

In Magnetic Moon, you play Mike Erlin, part of the crew of the spaceship Stellar Queen. Your task is to try to free the ship from the tractor beam originating from an alien moon. In the sequel, Starship Quest you must find the secret of the Keys to the Universe given to you by a priestess.

Both adventures impressed me by the very high standard of design. In addition, there is a handy Vocab command listing recognised words. The standard of the puzzles in Moon are high yet the plot, which injects a welcome vein of humour, moves at a brisk pace. The game gives you handy prods and pushes to aid you in case you become stuck.

The 128K versions of both contain extra locations and messages which increase the atmosphere and improve gameplay. I thoroughly recommend both adventures and can't wait to get my hands on The Axe of Kolt, Larry's next release.

MAGNETIC MOON 84%
STARSHIP QUEST 90%

PC £24.99

AUSTERLITZ

ARC

2nd December 1805 — what were you doing that day, eh? Napoleon, was pretty busy. His Grand Armee faced the combined forces of the Austro-Russian army across the Santon Hill and the River Bosenitz.

All of the classic Napoleonic formations and tactics are implemented. Troops vary in quality, artillery has a line of sight, troops can rout due to low morale and so on. Elements of the Fog of War are effectively introduced into Austerlitz with messengers taking time to deliver messages (if they don't get shot on the way). It is a pity there is no smoke to obscure the view — smoke was a significant factor in Napoleonic warfare, and often led to commanders ordering fateful actions due to them guessing what was going on. In addition, though, commanders only interpret orders according to their characters. So unpredictable results are sure to follow.

The Battlescape system is the same as that in the Armada review and the same criticisms apply. Anyone who has an affinity for this very special period of historical warfare will enjoy this game — pity the order system produces such a slow game though.

STRATEGY 82%

WHAT NOW?

A mountain of letters crying for help on Adventures, RPGs and Strategy games has finally got the TGM team to twist my arm to get me to start a first aid tips section. Hating broken arms, and always helpful, here I go...

Manhunter: New York
(PC, Amiga, ST)

Quite a few people out there appear to be having trouble finding the fourth module. You have to find out 'the' name and enter it into the MAD. This should lead you into the computer which is more than just a pretty face — hee, hee.

Wasteland
(C64, PC)

A few requests have reached me asking how the hell do you get into the Savage Village? What on earth is the password to enter the thing? Well, blow the wall down and strike a blow for freedom!

Having trouble being washed away in the sewers? Go on, you can tell me. If you are, just use a rope — find the right spot along the river.

Beyond Zork
(Amiga, ST, PC, C64)

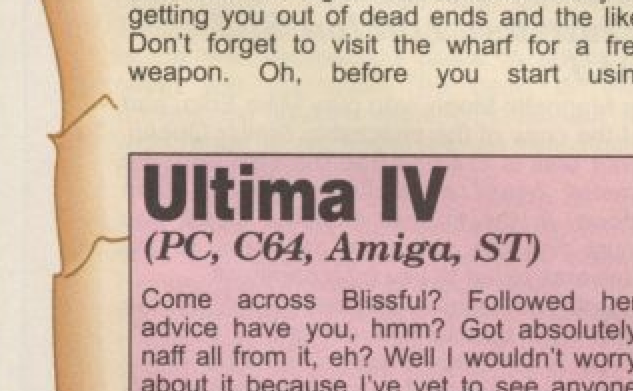
Giving specific hints for this game is tough as many of the puzzles are random in nature. However, if you find the Scroll of Recall, hang on to it tightly. It can be used over and over again and is rather handy for getting you out of dead ends and the like. Don't forget to visit the wharf for a free weapon. Oh, before you start using unknown objects it might be a good idea to save the game, see what the object does, restore the game and you have the knowledge and a fresh object. Easy, eh? Try to investigate the pub cellar and the lighthouse thoroughly before setting off anywhere else. They will open the game up to you, making progress a whole lot easier.

If you get the sapphire, hang on to it as it is the most valuable item in the game. It will enable you to buy an equally valuable item later on. Carefully read the booklet if you are having trouble with the monkey-grinder at Accardi-by-the-Sea.

Now onto the dreaded Christmas Tree monsters, swishing their tinsel, blinking their lights and singing 'Dwaarnyn The Dark-Nosed Ur-Grue'. These fiends are kept at bay by a single glyph inscribed in snow. If you find that they block the westward pathfind a caterpillar. It's not in the immediate vicinity, though.

Ultima IV
(PC, C64, Amiga, ST)

Come across Blissful? Followed her advice have you, hmm? Got absolutely naff all from it, eh? Well I wouldn't worry about it because I've yet to see anyone get anything positive from her. Just ignore her, everyone else does.



688 Attack Sub
(PC)

Little did you know, comrade, that in the Torpex '89 mission there is a Soviet Alfa class sub lying quietly on the bottom to observe the exercise. Chase him off by running straight for him and 'pinging' him a couple of times.

Also, in the Goulash scenario, where you are guarding a group of merchant ships from two surface vessels, you may cry out in frustration as a squadron of Back fire bombers swoop in for the kill — you can't touch the aircraft with the weaponry available to you. You can engage the ships as soon as possible, though —because they are the ones that radio the bombers in towards you, it'll keep their minds occupied.

King's Quest IV
(PC, Amiga, ST)

Can't safely exit the Ogre's hut, eh? Well, I'm sorry to say that this sequence is purely random. So keep trying, folks. Oh, the shovel can only be used five times and then it breaks, so use it with care. She obviously shops at my local DIY shop.

Ultima V
(PC, ST, C64)

Remember the coordinates given by the Demon for the Shard of Hatred. Yes *that* Demon, well they're wrong — you know what demons are like. You may have trekked to that very location and found a few grains of dust but not much else. The secret is to go down Covetous to the underworld, walk south to the mountains and then head off westward. That should put you on the right track, at least. Use a few gems while you're there, to see what's around.

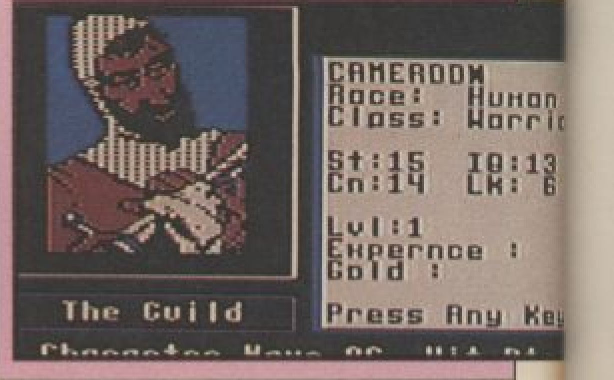
Then there is Smith, the talking horse. (Sometimes I wonder about Origin, I really do.) Anyway it is important to know where he is but his conversation is of no use. Unless you're Princess Anne and you're into that sort of thing.

Sentinel Worlds 1— Future Magic
(PC, C64)

The Battlestation is causing all kinds of confusion, mayhem, mental agony and frustration. (Sounds like a good game doesn't it?) The first level has three different room configurations which are repeated throughout the level. So even if you think you are walking around in circles, you're not really. Each level is nine rooms wide by eight rooms high. So the area is mappable. Get the trusty graph paper out. Oh, and use a long range scanner for co-ordinates.

Bard's Tale II
(PC, C64)

The fifth word of the ten on level four of Dargoth's Tower is a bit of a humdinger to find isn't it? Actually, it's in the dark area, in a small room, where the 'stairs up' are located. Watch those spinners and persevere. Yes, I know — sometimes I wanted to persevere the game right through the window too, but that's another story.



Leisure Suit Larry II
(PC, Amiga, ST)

Having trouble with a, er... 'full' bikini top and KGB spies? Ahem, well if you managed to grab an object from the guest room — this may be of some use in the Jungle.

![PC Engine]

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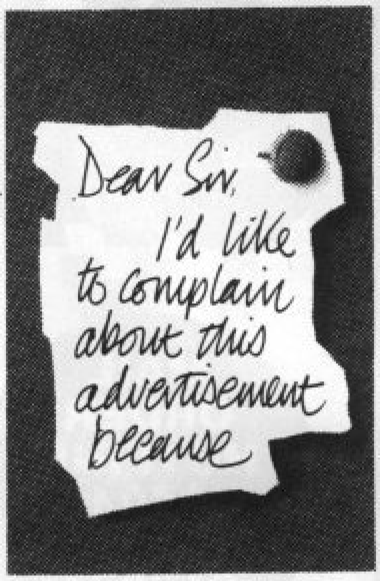
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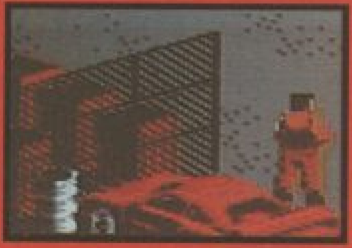


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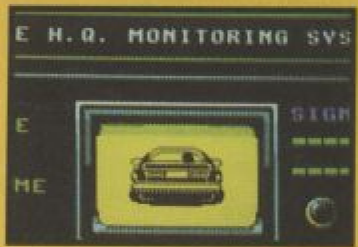
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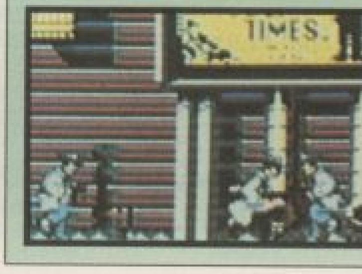
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BACK ISSUES

TX:010 September 88 Conning the Computer - Mel Croucher looks at computer fraud!
TX:011 October 88 Whatever happened to Ninetendo? Jeff Minter's amazing new ST light synthesizer!
TX:012 November 88 The First British Console! - The Slipstream! The Real Cybernauts - Cyberpunk and Robocop!
TX:013 December 88 Pirates - an investigation of the wrong side of the law!
TX:014 January 89 The Gift of the Guppie! Confrontation Coin-op!
TX:015 February 89 Flight Formation - Diary: Creation of a new 16-bit flight game.
TX:016 March 89 The Power Generations: The Konix Multisystem.
TX:017 April 89 The Rising Sons: Ninetendo's 16-bit Super Famicon and Sega's Mega Drive.
TX:018 May 89 DPaint 3 reviewed! Argonaut's F117A Agressor preview.
TX:019 June 89 Console Dawn! Japans 16-bit attack on Europe.
TX:020 July 89 Indy's back! Interview with Lucasfilm's ace programmers - Vector Graphics.
TX:021 August 89 Batman is back! - Hand held and LCD:CES Report.
TX:022 September 89 Amiga Into Mac! The latest in emulation. Plus David Crane — exclusive interview!
TX:023 October U.S Exclusive:Imagination Workshop — Licensed to sell: A look at the real-life Bonds — New series on MIDI.
TX:024 November 89 Affordable Archimedes: TGM looks at the hard- and software — Our Man In Japan special — Mel Croucher looks at CD-ROM.
TX:025 December 89 Skydiving with subLogic — Our Man in Japan reveals the new Super PC Engine — Play By Mail: John Woods on GAD games.
TX:026 Janurary 90 American supplement— Disney World exposed — Review of all the latest joysticks — Sound sampling — PC sound cards.
TX:027 Feburary 90: Space Ace — it's flippin crazy mate! David Wolf — He's a special agent! First EVER reviews of new Atari LYNX games! The CD side of computers, plus more action than you'll find in a ferret!

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Wanted desperately. The original 'Balance of Power' (not 1990 version) for Atari 520ST (single sided drive). Must have manual. Please write to Brenton Clark, 6 Forsythe Place, Massey, Auckland 8, New Zealand if you can help.

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Amiga contacts wanted worldwide to exchange quality hints, tips and demos. Fast 100% reply guaranteed (beginners helped). For the latest stuff please send letters, scribbles and literary compositions to Martin, 16 Oldfield Terrace, Stannington, Sheffield S6 6EB.

USER GROUPS

MIG is a new group. We want more coders & contacts. Write to 145 Altway, Aintree, Liverpool L10 3JF. PS: Any good GFX or music people also very welcome.

FANZINES

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READER PAGE

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Computing is fun

Dear TGM
Why do some folks insist on ruining the fun of computing? The two gentleman that have disturbed my peace are Alex Card and Stewart May (Readerpage, Dec 1989).

Both are writing about something that should bring joy to the lives of many. The advent of low-cost, powerful 32-bit home computing (ie, the Archimedes A3000) is undoubtedly a great thing. But what's this? 'Infinitely better than the ST and Amiga...'. Conversely: 'being a tiny bit quicker than the ST and Amiga...' Oh no, bickering already, are we? We do not deserve such mindless drivel. I thought the ST/Amiga thing had finished, but this time it's 32-bitters trying to stomp all over 16-bitters (who up till now were busy doing the same to 8-bitters everywhere), and threatening to reduce the 16-bits' glorious prestige to zilch.

Why? Why laugh at your colleagues' misfortunes and dwindling hardware, instead of having fun with RISC? Please, 32-bit users, don't create an inferiority complex among 16-bit users (I just splashed out on a 1MB expansion and second drive!!!), we're too busy having fun.

Let's avoid another 'war'. Technology isn't something you use against others, even when they're bug-faced Amiganoids like me. And if my effort to establish world peace fails, I dare not think what kind of havoc the appearance of cheap transputers might wreak — heavens have mercy!!
Liar Haifa

Yawn, yawn...

Why don't people agree?

Dear TGM
Here comes an old chestnut or two but please bear with me. How come games reviews vary from mag to mag? Presumably, for a game to get good marks, it would have good scrolling, decent sprites, sound, gameplay etc... But most of all lastability and value for money. So why did you give Cloud Master 20% and advise buying High Tech World, which other mags have slagged off as being bland. Then, in Wonderboy III: Dragon's Trap (Sega 71%) you questioned whether anyone should pay £28.00 and continued to recommend Wonder Boy III: Dragon's Lair (PC Engine 86%) which costs £40.

Let's face it, they're two different games. The first, a thinker's platform adventure with nice graphics, loads of screens and good gameplay. What more could you want? (I ask this and say nice things about the game because it's my opinion.)

The second is a platform shoot-'em-up from a very good arcade machine, I seem to remember. Does this mean shoot-'em-ups are better than adventures? Of course not. It's all down to individual preference. Although, I do find it interesting to read someone else's opinion. How many reviewers favour a game because of their genre preference and hence get carried away with the percentage figures? — it surely must happen, sometimes. On the question of VFM, the answer is no game (unless it's a good sim or sports program) is worth £20.00, simply because once a game been completed or played to death, boredom and familiarity creep in.

If 16-bit computer owners think they've got it bad, then just bear in mind the stupid prices us console owners pay. The solution would be to rent them from shops — in the same way as videos. Maybe, an arcade game could be rented out after it's fulfilled its life in the arcades. I don't suppose it would be feasible or practical — with different formats, prices etc — but it's an idea. What do others think?
John Beard, Northolt, Middlesex

John, we all share your concern with the current high software prices, but there seems no way around it. Software houses promised a drop of software prices when the 16-bit

IBM misjudged

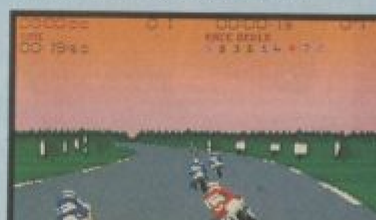
Dear TGM
I regret to inform you that you have misjudged the IBM! The IBM can totally crush the Amiga or ST with its immense power.

I was annoyed at finding in TGM024 you reviewed Vette and only displayed CGA graphics (I know there are EGA). Is it that the reviewers at TGM cannot afford a 1.2MB drive?

Now, about the IBM's poor sound. It is possible to buy a Roland MT-32 or an Ad-Lib card to enhance the IBM's music capability beyond ANY Amiga. The MT-32 offers eight-note polyphony, with percussion sounds. The Ad-Lib offers similarly impressive capabilities. Now, I saw a review in TGM saying that Fighter Bomber has bad sound. This game supports the MT-32 and so does NOT have bad sound but EXTREMELY GOOD sound! You also said that Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade has bad sound! This supports the Ad-Lib card and so this also has good sound. And WHERE may I ask is a review for some IBM MIDI software? I guess it just walked off. There are a growing number of games supporting these two sound boards so why don't you purchase them and see what a difference it makes. In future if a game says it supports one of these on the box, say so. As an owner of an MT-32, I would think twice about buying a game that does not support the MT-32.
Timothy Ebringer, Melbourne, Australia.

Where are you mate? Living on the moon? Oh, Australia, sorry. It just so happens that we spent many hours reviewing PC sound cards in the January issue of TGM. We also stated that we'd be mentioning any sound card support in all PC reviews from now on. So what's all the moaning about?

So, it's true, you found out, we do only have a poxy, snail-like Amstrad PC with EGA graphics to take pictures from. And the fact that our copy of Vette! was an American import meant that the EGA option wasn't available on 5.25-inch disk (yes, we've only got the one disk drive, too). However, for playability we've got a PC running at 12 Mhz — trouble is, it's got a orange monitor (worse than CGA!). For a true test we sometimes get Paul Rigby (who's so rich he's got a VGA PC with all the gadgets — including sound cards) to do the reviewing for us. You'll have noticed, in the previous issue of TGM, some great VGA PC shots of A-10 Tank Killer and EGA ones of David Wolf: Special Agent — Paul Rigby did the reviews! As British Rail (UK institution you Aussies may not be familiar with) would say... we're getting there.



machines and consoles became more popular. They're popular now but do you see any drop in prices? Don't make me laugh. I'll tell you what you do see. More company cars, more PR assistants, more in-store promotions, more in-house programmers (under the thumb) and more pressure for good magazine reviews from software houses (gripe, gripe). I'll tell you the type of gamesplayer that's got it all sussed out — the adventurer. Have you seen any 16-bit adventures recently — bloody marvellous. Brilliant packaging, loads of background, comprehensive instructions and manuals and most of all depth in gameplay. And without trying to sound unpatriotic (but actually doing a very good job of doing so), ever thought where all these great games are coming from — America.

Just a few years ago we were the envy of the Yanks. When they were still piddling about on boring Nintendos, dated Atari 2600s and poxy PCs, we had the cheap, colourful and fast Spectrum, and their cuddly and musical Commodore 64. These had the best specification, we had the best designers and subsequently Britain had the best games. The Yanks soon got wise to our cleverness and quickly wooed the top programmers and sound and graphics folks to live the high life in the States. And where's the innovation gone out of Britain? Alan Sugar sucked it all up, fed it through his Joyce and figured it would make as much money as De Lorean (another true British innovator!).

But what were we talking about? Prices? Yeah, too expensive aren't they!

Who's copying who?

Dear TGM
I buy both TGM and ZZAP!64/AMIGA (I won't say which one is better — you'd only send the heavy mob around).

Anyway, in January's issues you both reviewed F-29 Retaliator, and after much close examination I found that both reviews were almost identical. I came to the conclusion that you copied ZZAP! because it came out almost a week earlier than you.

Is TGM becoming lazy and having to revert to borrowing (or stealing) articles from other mags or are you just telepathic. Oh yeah, before I go, do you know if Die Hard is coming out for Amiga?
Asad Qureshi, Northolt, Middlesex.

Mmm... don't know if we should tell you about Die Hard if that's what you think of us... (Only joking!)

It's takes a keen eye (and a very bored person) to scan through two reviews of the same game if they think they're similar. In fact, if you'd have looked at the bottom of the TGM review, you'd have seen the initials RH. Guess what they stand for? Robin Hogg. 'Who's Robin Hogg?' you ask. He's a strange Welshman who works for ZZAP. Thing is, he's an absolute expert when it comes to flight sims, so — in an effort to bring the most didactic review to the readers of TGM — we had to get Flight Commander Hogg to do the review. But why the same in both mags? To be honest, Robin was extremely busy finishing ZZAP when we sprung the request on him, and he didn't have time to completely rejig his appraisal. Anyway what's the point in changing a perfectly good review when Robin (who's an ex-TGMer, incidentally) has done such a grand job to start with.

As for the Die Hard question, it said in ZZAP last month that Die Hard... (just kidding). Latest news from Activision is that due to its US development the guys over here can do little about getting an Amiga version, bar programming it themselves. You'd be surprised at the amount of people eager to see Bruce Willis on the Amiga. The power of the people got Typhoon Thompson programmed on the Amiga (to be released by Domark in April), so I can't see what harm a few letters to Activision concerning Die Hard can do. Send your letters to: DIE HARD FOR THE AMIGA (or ST, I suppose), Activision (UK) Ltd, Blake House, Manor Farm Road, Reading, Berkshire RG2 0JN. Just tell 'em TGM sent you (they'll love that — Ed).

Reflections on the Eighties

Dear TGM
Without doubt the end of the Eighties saw the rise and rule of the software houses over the direction and availability of games in the marketplace.

The close of the Eighties also saw the rising voice of discontent among many gamers over what they saw as hype and clones. Likewise, they ignored games designers who felt they had something to offer the market in however humble a way. These two gripes were a choir singing in the wilderness.

As one of the latter, I do not intend to pass through the Nineties (despite my advancing years) without making an effort to claim them for my own. The prospect of advances in home computerware and consoles as predicted for the new decade is a delight. The depression sets in when you realise the software houses in many cases intend to carry on their slow march instead of leaping forward to catch up with technology.

Dare I ask that all visionaries who are currently being ignored write to me and we'll form a club. A forum where ideas can be shared, and one which can be tapped into by software houses and gamers who'd like to know what we have to offer.

Write to me at the Bureau of Alternative Designs and Advanced Systems Software (BADASS), 35 Ardcroy Road, Croy, Inverness, Scotland IV1 2PL.

The decade of the Nineties will only belong to those who want to make it theirs!
Frank Cavanagh, Inverness

It does seem a great pity that technology such as the CD-I equipment reviewed in Issue 27 may not come out for years yet — especially when Philips say they'll be releasing it for £500. Although, we should be thankful that our software market is one of the most cosmopolitan in the world. Could you imagine being in Japan and having to play all those boring adventures or incessant shoot-'em-ups.

STAR LETTER



The Games machine

NEXT MONTH

A COMPLETELY STUNNING AND TOTALLY WELL-WICKED FREE GIFT!!

THE OCEAN PLAYING TIPS BOOKLET



Stuck to next month's happenin' issue of TGM is a brilliant FREEbooklet stuffed full with playing tips on all of Ocean'ssmash-hit games!! Chase HQ, Operation Thunderbolt, RoboCop,Batman and many more! Miss out on this and you'll end up a Joker!

I PLUS I

SO, YOU WANT TO BE A POP STAR?!

TGM shows you how with the crucial guide to taking you and your computer on the road to rock stardom!

HOW TO TOPPLE THE TOWER OF BABEL!

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The games! The glamour! The stuff that's happening through 1990!

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CHECK IT OUT ON MARCH 15!

Due to the dynamic nature of the computer market we can not guarantee that all the features mentioned will appear next month — but if anything is missed we'll replace it with something even better!

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UNCLE MEL'S TRIVIA QUIZ

1) What did the following games have in common on launch: RoboCop, Xenon II, Falcon, Federation of Free Traders?
2) Within 3%, what percentage of the British population have a home computer?
3) Who is schoolboy Peter Parker better known as?
4) CRL have launched Search for the Titanic. When exactly did it sink?
5) What sci-fi weapon has been fitted to HM Navy type-22 destroyers for the past ten years?
6) Unscramble these micros: Head Crimes, Mouse Cap, It's a Rat.
7) Give or take 50 years, when was binary code invented?
8) How many infected AIDS Information virus disks were mailed out to business addresses around the world last December, and how many were delivered in the UK?
9) After turning in a profit of $284,000 12 months ago, how much was Blue Chip Systems Software bought out for, to the nearest pound?
10) According to Software Toolworks' Bruce Lee Lives: when did he die, how old was he and how tall was he?
11) The QWERTY keyboard layout was designed to be as difficult to operate as possible. Why?
12) What's the difference between Grand Prix and Martech?
13) Who were Godzilla's adversaries in the following movies: Godzilla Versus Megallon, Godzilla Versus Hedora, Godzilla Versus The Thing?
14) Code Masters claimed that their CD Games Pack contained 30 games. Why are they fibbers?
15) 1961 was the last year that read the same upside-down. When's the next one, and will Konix have delivered?
16) Which of the following is not a genuine computer language: AWK, POP, SPURT, KLEENEX?
17) Which mathematician gave his name to Algebra: Algy Bra, Al Kwarizimi, El Zebra?
18) Which item of hardware was used for the core of Queen's latest album, The Miracle?
19) Which European country boasts the fastest-growing games software market?
20) Why did the US Viewer's Association want Mighty Mouse banned from TV?

ANSWERS 1) They were all bugged. 2) 28%. 3) Spider-man. 4) Midnight April 14th/15th 1912 (The Titanic, not CRL). 5) Laser guns. 6) Archimedes, Sam Coupe, Atari ST. 7) 340BC. 8) 35,000 worldwide, 10,000 UK. 9) To you John, a quid. 10) 1973, aged 33, height 5'2". 11) Early mechanical keys jammed up because typists were too fast, so blame the Victorians for today's loony layout 12) Only the spelling. 13) A giant cockcroach, smog, moth caterpillars. 14) Each CD contains 64 games tracks, two slideshow options and two volume test tracks. 15) 6009, probably not. 16) KLEENEX, it's a utility. 17) Al Kwarizimi, born in Persia, 830AD. 18) An Atari ST. 19) Hungary (245% in 12 months). 20) They claimed to have seen Mighty Mouse snorting cocaine.



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